

**Mike Bartlett**

# **KING CHARLES III**



N

H

B

Mike Bartlett

# KING CHARLES III



NICK HERN BOOKS  
London

[www.nickhernbooks.co.uk](http://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk)

## **Contents**

[Title Page](#)

[Original Production](#)

[Thanks](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Characters](#)

[Note on Text](#)

[\*King Charles III\*](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Copyright and Performing Rights Information](#)

*King Charles III* was first performed at the Almeida Theatre, London, on 3 April 2014. The cast was as follows:

SARAH/GHOST/TELEVISION PRODUCER	Katie Brayben
WILLIAM	Oliver Chris
HARRY	Richard Goulding
SPENCER/NICK/SIR GORDON	Nyasha Hatendi
MR EVANS	Adam James
CAMILLA	Margot Leicester
CHARLES	Tim Pigott-Smith
COOTSY/CLIVE/SIR MICHAEL	Tom Robertson
MR STEVENS	Nicholas Rowe
JAMES REISS	Nick Sampson
JESS	Tafline Steen
KATE	Lydia Wilson
MUSICIANS	Anna-Helena McLean, Belinda Sykes
<i>Director</i>	Rupert Goold
<i>Designer</i>	Tom Scutt
<i>Composer</i>	Jocelyn Pook
<i>Lighting Design</i>	Jon Clark
<i>Sound Design</i>	Paul Arditti

## **Thanks**

Thanks to Tom Dingle and the Jersey Arts Trust, Jonny Donahoe, Rupert Goold, James Grieve, Headlong, Robert Icke, Clare Lizzimore, George Perrin, Ben Power and Tom Scutt.

*M.B.*

*For Samuel*

## **Characters**

KING CHARLES III

CAMILLA

WILLIAM, DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE

CATHERINE (KATE), DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE

HARRY

JAMES REISS

MR EVANS, *Prime Minister*

SPENCER

COOTSY

JESS

MR STEVENS, *Leader of the Opposition*

GHOST

SARAH

NICK

CLIVE

SERVANT

PAUL

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN

TERRY

SIR GORDON

BUTLER

SIR MICHAEL

TELEVISION PRODUCER

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

*And* CLUBBERS, ATTENDANTS, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,  
COMMUTERS, PROTESTERS, MEMBERS OF THE PRESS

### **Note on Text**

*( – ) means the next line interrupts.*

*(...) at the end of a speech means it trails off. On its own it indicates a pressure, expectation or desire to speak.*

*A line with no full stop at the end indicates that the next speech follows on immediately.*

*This ebook was created before the end of rehearsals and so may differ slightly from the play as performed.*



## **Prologue**

*A choir sings.*

*The funeral procession of Queen Elizabeth II goes past.*

## ACT ONE

### 1.1

*Enter CAMILLA, and KING CHARLES III.*

CAMILLA.

My wond'rous Charles you looked composed throughout  
You did her proud, for as she would have liked  
You never showed your pain, but stood instead  
A virtuous man of dignity and grace.  
Immovable, inscrutable as stone.

CHARLES.

Please don't. It's simply what I had to do.  
We'll find no dignity in cov'ring up  
The way we feel. What son should, standing  
Waiting at his mother's grave, stop his tears?  
What lurks within the public mind that needs  
Us less than human, made of tin. All stiff  
And empty. Soulless, unemotive droids.

CAMILLA.

Droids? Are you alright?

CHARLES.

My whole existence has like most of us  
Been built upon the ones who gave me birth.  
And now they're gone. That's it. First Dad. Now Mum.  
The only truth: I am alone.

CAMILLA.

Except for me.

CHARLES.

It's not the same, Camilla. The love, with us,  
It's all my life, but never can replace  
Parental word, a mother's hand to hold.

But here – the others – back to statue –  
It's Catherine, William, complete with George.

*Enter WILLIAM, DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE holding  
George, and CATHERINE, DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE.*

Hello! You're radiant, despite the grave  
Restrictions of the mourning dress. It is  
Your gift my dear, it's what you've brought to us  
A sense of fashion, better hair as well  
That is, if, like myself, you've any left.

WILLIAM.

So even on a day like this you'll make  
A joke about my ever-balding head.

CHARLES.

A day like this indeed, my son you'll learn  
When darkness strikes, a little humour helps

KATE.

I never thought I'd see her pass away

CHARLES.

I felt the same.

WILLIAM.

How are you Dad?

CHARLES.

...

WILLIAM.

It must be hard to deal with loss combined  
With gain. For soon, at last, you will be King

CAMILLA.

Not soon.

WILLIAM.

Three months –

CAMILLA.

Your father rules today.

KATE.

I thought the coronation marked the change

CHARLES.

You're right, officially that is the case –

CAMILLA.

But England, Scotland, Northern Ireland  
They cannot stand without a king or queen  
For all the months it takes to organise  
A coronation –

WILLIAM.

Wales.

CAMILLA.

Wales what?

WILLIAM.

Wales too.

You missed it out.

CAMILLA.

Then Wales. As well. And Wales!

KATE.

But surely constitutionally speaking –

CAMILLA.

Oh sweet my dear we have no constitution  
Instead Tradition holds us to account.  
And better held we are by one who bends  
And changes, flexing to the way we live,  
Than like Americans, who stuck with words  
And laws composed by good, well-meaning men,  
That wanted best, but could have no idea  
Of how we live today, do have a right  
To carry arms, then shoot themselves to bits.

KATE.

Tradition then, it still –

CAMILLA.

Tradition holds that on the death of kings  
Or queens, the next is monarch straight away.  
He needs no proclamation, needs no man  
To shout 'The Queen is dead, long live the King'.  
Your father ruled the moment Granny passed.

KATE.

So coronation day itself is just  
The ancient costumes worn, and lines to learn,  
A slice of theatre, that's played for fun?

CHARLES.

Not fun I think, for me, I hate those things.

HARRY *enters*.

CAMILLA.

Harry! It's such a joy to have you home.  
Even in such morbid circumstance as this.

HARRY.

I might head off. If that's okay? I know there's this thing, but I'm tired.

CHARLES.

You want to go? Of course, we'll say you're ill, if that's –

HARRY.

Yeah right, that's it, I don't feel well. Yeah.

CAMILLA.

Why? What's the matter?

HARRY.

Er... Headache? But that was all good wasn't it? It went okay, from what  
I could see?

KATE.

Do you really have to go?

HARRY.

It's not... I mean... the whole... I've only been back a few days, can't  
deal with all the chat. The people. It's such a change from being out there.

CHARLES.

It's important Harry.

HARRY.

Yeah but the headache though.

*They look at each other for a moment.*

*Then he goes.*

CHARLES.

I thought one day, he'd grow into a man,  
But still he acts as if he's seventeen

CAMILLA.

Perhaps it's true, the battle's left behind  
But still bombs crash and drum within his head

WILLIAM.

More like the sound is drum and bass – his pain  
Through last night's drink, than by the sorry war.  
We should leave, and mingle with the crowds.  
A single round should be sufficient, then  
We're at the Palace, yes?

CAMILLA.

The Heads of State.

KATE.

We'll stop at Kensington to put him down  
And then return.

CHARLES.

He didn't cry.

WILLIAM.

He – what?

CHARLES.

I thought he would. A child like that.  
But something in him understood and so  
He watched and listened, and like all of us  
He kept his real emotions to himself.  
In public William, you were the same,

For as a babe so silent in the cot  
We worried you might quietly have died.

WILLIAM.

The same with George, it's parent's paranoia.

CHARLES.

Of course, that's true. The ever-constant fear  
That one might somehow lose one's son.

*Enter JAMES REISS, his Press Secretary, who waits.*

WILLIAM.

But Dad, you're shaken up.  
Perhaps we should take time to talk?

CHARLES.

I'm sorry. It must wait. James wants us now –

CAMILLA.

Charles – James will happily do whatever you  
Command. You can spend time with William –

CHARLES.

We'll see you later on.

*A pause.*

WILLIAM.

Alright.

*They go.*

JAMES.

Just Mr Evans, waiting now, to speak.  
Before you walk together from the door.  
I am afraid the press are kettled up  
And staying all this time, expect their shot.

CHARLES.

I should be told when each their mothers die,  
And come the funeral, instead of flowers,  
I'll send a hundred cameramen, who'll snap  
And capture every tear, then publish all  
So we can look and laugh in turn at them.

*Beat.*

A moment please, alone, before it starts.

JAMES *goes.*

Camilla you as well, I'm sorry but...  
You understand?

CAMILLA.

I do.

*She kisses him, and goes.*

CHARLES.

At last. I needed room for thought to breathe  
In every second since my mother passed  
I'm trapped by meetings, all these people ask  
Me questions, talking, fussing, what to do,  
Expect I'll have opinion there, all good  
To go, like Findus ready meals for one,  
Pre-wrapped and frozen, 'This is what I think.'  
As if I know! My better thoughts – they start  
From scratch, slow cooked, and brewed with time.  
My life has been a ling'ring for the throne.  
Sometimes I do confess I 'maged if  
My mother hap'd to die before her time,  
A helicopter crash, a rare disease  
So at an early age I'd be in charge –  
Before me years of constant stable rule.  
But mostly I have hoped she'd keep in health  
That since for most, outrageous dreams and hopes  
Are all they'll ever have, and yet their life is full,  
So I am better Thoughtful Prince than King.  
Potential holds appeal since in its castle walls  
One is protected from the awful shame  
Of failure.

JAMES *enters.*

JAMES.

Your Majesty, the Prime Minister's here.



CHARLES.

Bring him in.

JAMES *goes*.

No more, exactly as Camilla said,  
Although the crown has yet to sit upon  
My head and burden me with gold,  
I am the King default, and will ascend

MR EVANS, *the Prime Minister, enters*.

MR EVANS.

Your Majesty.

CHARLES.

Mr Evans.

MR EVANS.

Sincere condolences upon your loss.

CHARLES.

A loss I think that all her subjects share.

MR EVANS.

Of course, we miss our Queen. But you will feel  
A sharper pain, I'm sure.

*Beat.*

You felt she would have liked the service?

CHARLES.

I trust she would, for planned it was by her.

*Beat.*

MR EVANS.

I hope you heard the people outside cheer?

CHARLES.

When? No. A cheer? A cheer for what?

MR EVANS.

Towards the end from through the doors and walls  
We heard hip-hip and all at once there came  
Hooray, and then three times repeated same.

And, although perhaps the tone was wrong  
At least it showed they cared and loved the Queen.

CHARLES.

I didn't hear, my mind must have been somewhere else.

JAMES *enters*.

JAMES.

Your Highness. Mr Evans. The press await.

CHARLES.

We'll talk some more across the weeks to come.

MR EVANS.

We will indeed.

CHARLES.

But now you must excuse me, for I have  
To walk from here, and face the baying mob.

JAMES.

Your Highness you may not recall we did  
Decide for public reassurance you  
Would leave with Mr Evans at your side,  
The Crown and State, Prime Minister and King.

CHARLES.

We did agree?

JAMES.

Indeed.

CHARLES.

You're right.

JAMES.

Just so.

CHARLES.

You're right I don't recall. And now we're here  
I feel instead I should remain apart  
From politics and walk with royals alone.  
I'm sure Prime Minister will understand

MR EVANS.

Of course, I'll go right now, and clear the way.

JAMES *and* MR EVANS *go*.

CHARLES.

Such equal billing was a joy when Prince.

To share the stage did spread attention out.

But now I'll rise to how things have to be

The Queen is dead, long live the King. That's me.

CHARLES *goes*.

## 1.2

HARRY *and* SPENCER, *in the VIP room at Boujis*.

*Behind them, out in the club itself, CLUBBERS mill about with drinks – dancing.*

SPENCER.

How was it then?

HARRY.

Depressing –

SPENCER.

Yeah, sorry about your granny. Good sort, all things considered. Mother won't stop looking at banknotes and crying her eyes out.

HARRY.

I didn't mean Granny.

SPENCER.

What? Look, I completely understand you must respect a serious period of mourning and all that boohoo, but you deserve a classic night out, and here's something to cheer you up. Recommendation from my father. Import from Eastern Europe.

SPENCER *produces a black bottle*.

It's black. That's all we know.

SPENCER *takes the top off and HARRY swigs some. It's strong and disgusting.* COOTSY *enters – wearing jeans and a cheap top.*

COOTSY.

Hello bitches.

HARRY.

I beg your pardon.

COOTSY.

Wagwon.

SPENCER.

Speak English Coots.

HARRY.

What the hell's all that?

COOTSY.

Don't know what you mean?

SPENCER.

You look like you got raped by Primark.

COOTSY.

Undercover mate.

SPENCER.

Beg your pudding.

COOTSY.

Heard about this place called New Cross, thought I couldn't go in what I usually wear, probably be stripped naked by the... you know... twats, so... Off I go. Music's shit. One legitimate female in the place, asked her if she wanted to meet you, she was affirmative. I've brought her back. Now you're out the army I thought you might want to, you know –

HARRY.

Coots.

COOTSY.

Do a pleb.

HARRY.

Yeah.

COOTSY.

Knob a prole.

HARRY.

Not in the mood.

COOTSY.

Approach a subject from a different angle.

HARRY.

Where is she?

COOTSY.

Toilet. Making herself look presentable. Best she can. Her name's Jess.

SPENCER.

What's she like?

COOTSY.

Don't know, mate. Can't get past the voice.

SPENCER.

Want some of this?

COOTSY.

What is it?

SPENCER.

No idea.

COOTSY.

Lovely.

*SPENCER pours COOTSY some wine. He drinks, then spits it out as, behind them, JESS enters. She's mid-twenties, well dressed, clearly clever.*

JESS.

Er... hello.

COOTSY.

Jessica!

JESS.

Not joking then.

COOTSY.

What?

JESS.

Thought you were joking, but here he is. Prince Harry.

HARRY.

Yeah?

JESS.

Good to meet you. Cootsy here said he could make it happen and I thought now's my chance.

HARRY.

For what?

COOTSY.

Wait – what do you mean?

JESS.

Is Charles really your dad?

HARRY.

What?

JESS.

Or was it the other one?

SPENCER.

The other one?

JESS.

Yeah. What's his name?

SPENCER.

No.

JESS.

Hewlitt.

SPENCER.

Hewitt.

JESS.

Her butler or whatever.

SPENCER.

Not the butler.

COOTSY.

No the butler didn't do it.

JESS.

Cos you're very ginger. I don't think that's a bad thing but seriously if you haven't done a test yet you should, cos if Hewitt was your dad instead, you'd be out of the family, free of it!

HARRY.

Why would I want to be free of it?

JESS.

Cos you hate it.

Don't you?

*Beat.*

HARRY.

...no.

SPENCER.

He really doesn't.

JESS.

Yeah come on! You do. He *does*, this dressing up, getting fucked, it's because you're part of this big thing, but you don't get anything back. You won't even be King. You'll just be the drunken uncle, get married a few times, divorced, always pissed. A trap. For you. Isn't it?

HARRY.

That's what you think?

JESS.

Yeah.

HARRY.

So what should I do then?

JESS.

What?

HARRY.

What should I do instead?

JESS.

You...

Well...

You really want to know?

*Beat.*

COOTSY.

Look, I think it's time for you to tap out darling, slightly abusing our host's hospitality here. Go on. Off you pop. We've seen girls like you before, won't be long before the cameraphone comes out –

JESS.

I don't think you have.

COOTSY.

What?

JESS.

Seen girls like me before.

HARRY.

Coots, Spencer, someone wants you at the bar.

COOTSY.

You telling us to fuck off mate?

HARRY.

Yes I am.

COOTSY.

Er – You realise she's probably a Socialist or something?

SPENCER.

No. Alright. Come on. Not wanted.

COOTSY.

Harry, word of warning, she's just a bit of fun yeah? That's all she's supposed to be. Pop and stop yeah? Drive-through.

*They go. Now it's just JESS and HARRY.*



JESS.

Your mates are idiots.

HARRY.

They're loyal.

JESS.

There's something a bit sweet about you, isn't there?

HARRY.

That's what people say.

JESS.

You come across really badly on TV but in person you're...

HARRY.

...

JESS.

You got security?

HARRY.

Yes.

JESS.

Get rid of them. Come on.

HARRY.

Where are we going?

JESS.

Prince Harry.

You have no idea.

### 1.3

MR EVANS *enters with* CHARLES.

*Tea is on the table.*

CHARLES.

Shall I be mother?

MR EVANS.

Thank you, yes, that's kind.

CHARLES *pours the tea.*

CHARLES.

Well good, so how shall we begin? Perhaps –

MR EVANS.

Well oft I run through current legislation  
Or international matters sometimes might  
Take precedence, but here today I thought  
We might commence by talking of a bill  
About to land upon your desk that seeks  
The royal approval.

CHARLES.

Yes? What bill d'you mean?

MR EVANS.

To limit future growth and mass expanse  
Of runways. What environmental checks  
There are, have long been out of date –

CHARLES.

You must

Excuse me, much as this wants our attention,  
I had assumed we'd start with something else.

MR EVANS.

Of course. Whichever subject you would like.

CHARLES.

Your bill concerning privacy, that sets  
Restriction on the freedom of the press.  
I understand it's passed the House and soon  
Will be the British law, is that correct?

MR EVANS.

That is correct, the regulation of the press  
We feel is overdue, and although we would  
Prefer them in an ideal world to keep their house  
In order by themselves, this has been tried,

So many times and each time failed.  
So now, and in response to public feeling  
There is a bill which will in some small way  
Ensure the press cannot intrude upon  
The private life of innocents, and if they do  
Will have provision so that average men  
And women, children too, can have their day  
In court.

CHARLES.

I've read the bill.

MR EVANS.

You have? Well, good.

CHARLES.

...

MR EVANS.

What else is there to say, the bill has wide  
Support across the House both Commons and  
The Lords, and will next week arrive with you  
For signature to enter into law.

CHARLES.

You like this bill?

MR EVANS.

I absolutely do.

For we have seen, and you yourself must know  
Too well the lasting wounds the press inflict.

CHARLES.

...

MR EVANS.

We cannot risk another murder case  
Where phones belonging to the dead are hacked.  
It cannot be a right or civilised  
Country, in which, in any private place  
A toilet, bedroom, might be there concealed  
A tiny camera, then these photos 'splayed

As front-page news, the consequences thrown  
Around the world and everlasting, so  
Without a jury, judge, or evidence  
A punishment is meted out, a life  
Is ruined, reputation murdered.

CHARLES.

You do not think a principle is here  
At stake, that something vital to our sense  
Of freedom, both as individuals  
And country whole, is being risked?

MR EVANS.

I know the argument against and yet –

CHARLES.

The countless times we have through media scrum  
Exposed corruption, both in public life  
And private, matters that constabulary,  
Or government cannot or won't attend.  
And who polices the police? Who holds  
Those institutions to account that claim  
To be our guardians and serve us well?  
Perhaps to have the cure we must accept  
A vaccination of disease itself.  
Or better still, the press may be just like  
The antibodies present in our systems  
Evolved to seek and then, we hope, destroy  
The viruses that enter us from time to time.

MR EVANS.

But were the antibodies shown it was  
Both easier and better paid to launch  
Attack upon their hosts than spend resource  
To do what they were meant, it would not work.  
Before too long the body would collapse.

CHARLES.

Much like this metaphor, I fear –

MR EVANS.

Your Highness.

Of course I understand that view and have  
Myself considered where the balance lay.  
But both within the House of Commons and  
In every poll conducted 'cross the land,  
There is opinion something must be done.  
The law is what your people want –

CHARLES.

They want

The leaders they elected standing up  
And making choices they themselves cannot,  
Because they have not time, they pay their taxes well  
So we, or you, may take the time to study hard  
And make the right decision on the day.

MR EVANS.

I know, I have, and this is what we think.  
I have to say it does surprise, that with  
The great intrusion they have made into  
Your life, you'd have them left untouched like this  
What of the pack of wolves that mercilessly  
Did hunt to death your late and much-missed wife

CHARLES.

That's bold. So soon in our relationship.

MR EVANS.

What's bold?

CHARLES.

To utilise Diana.

*Beat.*

MR EVANS.

I'm sorry, but in fact it's rare to have  
To justify the passing of a law like this.  
I would have thought of all the victims  
You'd feel the strongest something must be done.

CHARLES.

As a man, a father, husband, yes I do.  
But that's not who we are when sat with you  
In here, not just am I defender of  
The faith but in addition I protect  
This country's unique force and way of life.  
We are not strong for manufacturing  
Politically our sway and influence  
Are in decline, and thankfully most of  
Our dubious Empire has bit the dust.  
But still we demonstrate and can export  
The way a just society should work:  
Judiciary, democracy and more –  
A low corruption rate. All those who hold  
The strings held to account themselves in turn.

MR EVANS.

Your Highness, thanks, I understand and say  
I will, if opportunity transpires,  
Make sure I take your view into account.  
Perhaps we should move on to other things.

CHARLES.

It is the law on privacy that holds  
Concern. And so I ask you tell me what  
As my Prime Minister you do intend.

MR EVANS.

The law is made, and passed. It is too late.

CHARLES.

My views to you mean nothing then

MR EVANS.

Your views mean much, but on this subject yes.  
I disagree with what you think and if  
You want my true intent, I will say more:  
That even if there was a chance to change  
The bill to take account of what you think.  
I would not see it done. The public vote

To choose the members of their Parliament  
And that is where decisions will be made  
Not in this room between the two of us.  
But sir, now please, it matters not, because  
The law is drawn, and voted on and passed.

CHARLES.

Then our weekly meeting's done.

*Pause.*

MR EVANS.

Your Highness –

CHARLES.

And thank you Mr Evans, though we don't  
Agree it has been most informative.

MR EVANS.

I do apologise if I have caused  
Offence, I simply wanted to explain my view.

CHARLES.

And so you have, we'll meet next week.

CHARLES *presses the buzzer.*

If you could send him in.

MR EVANS.

Then I should leave.

CHARLES.

I think you'll know my next appointment well  
*Enter MR STEVENS, the Leader of the Opposition.*

Ah Mr Stevens. Here, you recognise  
My guest.

MR STEVENS.

I'd not expected Mr Evans –

CHARLES.

I reasoned thus: In case there did arise  
An accusation that my vision here

Of left and right was being tilted out  
Of proper balance, only meeting one.  
I will from now make sure each week I have  
The usual half an hour with my good  
Prime Minister, but then give equal time  
For Leader of the Opposition too.

*Pause.*

How does this sound?

*Pause.*

MR STEVENS.

With all respect to Mr Evans here,  
I feel it wise you understand these meetings  
Begun in ghastly war, when Churchill came  
To weekly check the King was up to date,  
Are now part of a different scrutiny  
And cannot stand aloft from politics  
But should instead reflect the way it works.

CHARLES.

And Mr Evans do you have a view?

MR EVANS.

Your mother never felt the need, but if  
It is your wish, then good, you must.  
Now thank you, Highness, for our meeting here.  
Already I look forward to our next,  
But I must leave so you can gather up  
Opposing views from that I've tried to give.

*He goes.*

MR STEVENS.

Forgive me sir, but I am rather shocked  
By sarcasm I would have thought did not  
Have place in royal conversation such  
As this. He seemed to be, well, quite annoyed.

CHARLES.

He is a man of principle and used



To how my mother ruled. I hope he will  
In time see how a conversation 'tween  
The two of us cannot threaten him,  
But merely gives perspective.  
For instance he believes we need this bill  
To safeguard privacy, I'm not so sure.  
Your party voted 'gainst it, am I right?

MR STEVENS.

We did, Your Highness, for we felt it was  
Restrictive to our freedom of the press.

CHARLES.

And this, your vote, was no way influenced  
By other factors: need for good PR

MR STEVENS.

No.

CHARLES.

Donors to your cause and party funds.

MR STEVENS.

That's not –

CHARLES.

I have it with authority  
You are good friends with editors and have,  
On numerous 'ccasions had them round to tea.

MR STEVENS.

The cut and thrust of public life, you know

CHARLES.

The briefing paper that I had, it said  
At Christmas Eve you gifted one of them  
A horse.

MR STEVENS.

Now look. That's lies. Not true.  
It was a pony for her daughter, who  
When our two families met at lunch one day,

Expressed a want for such a beast and so  
When thinking what to get them come Noel –

CHARLES.

Despite all that, your group of friends is not  
Why you were keen to stop the current law.  
Instead it was on principle.

MR STEVENS.

Correct.

I do not think it right.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

I had not realised till I saw the law itself  
And feeling quite uneasy what it meant  
Did call my experts, lawyers to explain.  
The more they did elaborate, the more I knew  
This was a line I thought we shouldn't cross.  
But it's too late. And so the first law passed  
As King will be a law that's dangerous.  
I always hoped as Crown I'd have some small  
But crucial influence upon the State  
I'd given all my working life to serve.  
But Mr Evans does not like me, and  
Has made explicit that he will not change  
A single thing in light of what I say.  
And if this is the case then what am I?  
My mother gained respect from what she'd seen.  
The Blitz, she sat with Churchill, and met all  
The most important figures of her years.  
But what am I?

MR STEVENS.

It may not be too late to stop the law.

CHARLES.

But Houses Parliament and Lords have cast  
Their votes and therefore when I sign the bill –

MR STEVENS.

If you sign the bill.  
For surely that requirement remains  
Your choice, that is the power you possess.

CHARLES.

A ceremonial right, not one to use.  
It's not our place, would do more harm than good.

MR STEVENS.

I hate to differ but I think this strikes  
The heart of why we have a queen, or king.  
They are the check and balance of our land.  
I've always hoped that we could never see  
A Nazi Party making British laws  
Because the reigning monarch then would stand  
His ground and being Head of State refuse  
To sign, refuse to let the country lose  
Democracy, and doing so, provoke  
Revolt. Perhaps I am romantic but  
I think the signature holds something more.

CHARLES.

To sign this bill would hardly mark the end  
Of crucial freedom and democracy.

MR STEVENS.

Then not important, write your name in ink,  
And unamended let it into law.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

I don't know how you politicians who,  
While wielding power over millions  
Can wear it lightly, when everything you do  
Will change a life at least and probably more  
'Twere me the weight of that would plague my dreams.

MR STEVENS.

The secret weapon we all use?

A sleeping pill. No matter what you've done  
You rest assured, and wake without the guilt.

CHARLES.

Thank you Mr Stevens.

MR STEVENS.

Your Highness.

MR STEVENS *goes*.

CHARLES.

I hoped that once in place, an instinct here,  
That had been dormant up till now would thrive,  
And override my indecisive mind  
But now I'm Majesty, and feel the same.  
A weakling shadow of what went before –

*Enter GHOST, in white veils, hidden face.*

But wait! What's that? I need to get some sleep.  
I thought I saw a shimm'ring light, just in  
The corner of my eye, a floating thing –

Again! She has a gait I can recall,  
But who? Hello! She cannot hear, she looks  
Away, as if she's searching, seeking out –  
Mother?

*Exit GHOST.*

She's gone, and now she has, I'm not quite sure  
If she was there at all, perhaps it was the light  
What am I doing here?

I'm certain all she was, was nerves and ills.  
I'll call my doctor now for sleeping pills.

*Exit CHARLES.*

## ACT TWO

## 2.1

*No. 10 Downing Street.*

MR EVANS *and* SARAH, *his Chief Political Adviser, and* NICK, *his Communications Adviser.*

NICK.

Tristan – news and not the sort you’d like.

MR EVANS.

You do surprise me Nick, whenever you  
Come rushing in, forget to knock, and with  
Your tie behind your shoulder thus, I know  
The shit has hit the fan indeed. Go on,  
Let’s take the spray, so we can start to clean.

SARAH.

What’s that you’re holding? Looks important, here –  
*She takes it and reads.*

NICK.

It’s from the King, this morning sent, but not  
By the interior government service mail,  
Instead by hand, his underbutler came  
Approached the gates of Number Ten, a case  
Under his arm, and asked to hand this to yourself.  
The gate police who used to being ’bused  
By tourists and in fact your ministers  
Did think the butler joker and dispensed  
With him away. Shouting he refused and said  
That from the King he had a document  
Which must receive delivery at once.  
Eventually, and just to calm him down  
Because his voice was very high indeed  
The officers inspected what he waved.  
And finding that it looked official, called  
On us, and here, it seems to be a bill.

MR EVANS.

What bill?

SARAH.

On privacy, and where there should  
A signature be made, is blank and there  
In space below is writ, Assent Reserved  
And here beside, King Charles the Third is scrawled.  
This is a joke, the gate police were right:  
Our butler will not pay his student fees.

MR EVANS.

He's still around, the man that brought the bill?

NICK.

I think so, he was quite shook up, and so  
He sat and Linda gave him Earl Grey tea.

MR EVANS.

Then ask him here.

NICK.

Alright, I will. Two seconds.

NICK *goes.*

SARAH.

It's just a joke, we shouldn't waste the time.

MR EVANS.

When last we spoke he seemed disturbed about  
The passing of this bill.

SARAH.

What do you mean?

MR EVANS.

I mean he didn't want it law at all,  
And so he asked for me to think again.  
But I refused and thus abruptly there  
The meeting ended. Out, in record time.

*Enter NICK and CLIVE, the underbutler.*

NICK.

Prime Minister, the underbutler's here.

MR EVANS.

Thanks Nick, and now please call the Leader of  
The Opposition and request that he,  
At once come round to Number Ten, you say  
Emergency, if he prevaricates.

NICK.

Emergency?

MR EVANS.

And make sure not a word of this gets out.

NICK *goes*.

Right then, hello, I'm Tristan, what's your name?

CLIVE.

It's Clive, Your Honour.

MR EVANS.

Clive, relax and now,  
In detail tell me 'bout this letter brought.

CLIVE.

This morning at eleven, when I would  
On normal days bring coffee – right – the King  
Did turn and give to me the envelope  
You have there now, and said to me  
I should without delay go take the letter  
Not by normal channels but by hand  
Through London and deliver it myself  
To Downing Street. I said I wasn't sure  
That I, who only recently became  
An underbutler, had a chance to get  
Through the security and that perhaps  
He might be better sticking to his own  
Long-tested postal system? i.e. Royal Mail?  
But he was firm and so not wanting to  
Arouse the regal ire early in  
A promising career I donned my coat  
And through the rain approached the gates where there,  
Surrounded by a crowd of tourists all

With cameraphones, I said my piece that was  
The truth to the policemen standing wait.  
And not replying really all they did was laugh.  
So I repeated that by request  
And order of His Majesty I should  
Be granted passage so that I, a new,  
And honest underbutler might fulfil  
A promise to the King. But then, the more  
I stated royal purpose and intent, the more  
They laughed and so through mockery I did  
Become, I have to say, irate and railed  
Against the ear-less soulless men in blue.  
So that I do regret, but now at least  
You have the letter, and your secretary  
Linda made me a lovely cup of tea.

*Beat.*

SARAH.

Well thank you Clive, that's quite a story told.  
You may go back to Buckingham Palace  
And continue with your underbutlering

CLIVE.

Thank you both, I will.

*He goes.*

SARAH.

You're shitting me. Is this a fucking dream?  
It seems you were correct, our King is mad,  
And taken to communicate with us  
In methods from the nineteenth century.

MR EVANS.

It is a point, a statement here to note.  
The royal assent is not refused but here  
Reserved, he wants us all, but mostly me,  
To think again upon this bill and then,  
Resend, or not. I doubt that when it comes  
To it, he would in fact refuse to sign.



SARAH.

But doing this! If word got out, that he  
Within a month of sitting on the throne –

MR EVANS.

Before he has. The coronation's not  
For some time yet.

SARAH.

Right so, before he's e'en  
Throned or got a crown to call his own  
He's chosen to exert this power that  
His wiser mother never thought to use.

MR EVANS.

I always hoped that he above the rest  
Possessed a mind to understand the world.

SARAH.

You hate the royals, Tristan you always have.

MR EVANS.

I hated what they stood for, yes, but hoped  
That with a King who wanted progress, knew  
That Britain was unfair and wanted change...

NICK *enters*.

NICK.

Mr Stevens sir –

MR EVANS.

Well that was quick, I wonder what he knows...

MR STEVENS *enters*.

It's good to see you Mark. And thanks you came  
So soon.

MR STEVENS.

Well I was told emergency –

MR EVANS.

Please have a look at this, it came today.

MR STEVENS *looks at the letter*.

Of course, all that we say inside this room  
Is confidential, kept between ourselves.

MR STEVENS.

Of course.

*He reads.*

I see, and have you spoken to the King?

MR EVANS.

Not yet, I thought it better if we were  
As head of both the largest parties met  
In full agreement what response we give.  
Assuming, as we must, we leave aside  
The matter of the bill and look instead  
At simply what His Majesty intends.

MR STEVENS.

You know I didn't like this bill at all?

MR EVANS.

I do, but as I say it's not the point.

MR STEVENS.

It seems not just Conservatives can find  
The fault in letting Government take on  
The job of regulating newspapers.

MR EVANS.

With that you do imply the King is not  
Conservative, when surely he's as blue  
As is the blood that flows within his veins.

MR STEVENS.

If that's the case then he is red as you.  
Because despite his birth the King is just  
A human being, with views that are his own.

MR EVANS.

So in the conference you had did he  
Give any hint he might differ like this?

MR STEVENS.

We had a range of conversations that,  
On touching many subjects, may have glanced  
The privacy law. But as you know, it must  
Remain discreet between the King and I.

MR EVANS.

Of course, but did he say –

MR STEVENS.

I left him as  
I found him, sure that he would sign the bill.

MR EVANS.

And now he has refused, what is your stance?

MR STEVENS.

In fact I do agree. We cannot have  
The King approving laws depending on  
His own opinion, or the way he feels.  
So what do you intend to do, so that  
We may, without distress, or publically  
Embarrassing our newly minted King  
Explain to him the simple duty that  
He must uphold, whatever his own mind.

MR EVANS.

I thought that as he said he liked a range  
Of views, from both sides of the House, we might  
Together go and there persuade him to,  
Without delay, apply his signature  
And ratify the legislation here.

MR STEVENS.

Although appreciating any hand  
Outstretched across the aisle, I do believe  
In such a constitutional issue as,  
This surely is, it is important that  
While choirs carry passion but the words  
Are lost in many voices sung at once,  
So we in politics must all step back

And in agreement believing in just one,  
Entrust our finest soloist to sing.  
You are, unlike myself, elected sole  
And only leader of the British Isles.  
I am convinced the message will sound best  
And most authoritative said by you.

MR EVANS.

And if, once done, he still won't sign I'd have  
Your full support in standing by the bill.

MR STEVENS.

Of course. We are conservative in more  
Than party name. Tradition has its place  
And here it does protect our right to vote.  
His Majesty must not object. That's clear.

MR EVANS.

Good then, I'll try to see the King today,

MR STEVENS.

That sounds, to me, a plan, Prime Minister,  
It is uncharted waters we're thrust towards  
But thank you for consulting me in thought  
In this, be sure, you have my full support.

*He goes.*

## 2.2

*Buckingham Palace.*

HARRY *enters.* *He's with* JESS.

HARRY.

Leicester Square! Quiz machines, Tube platforms –

JESS.

What's this then? Your gallery?

HARRY.

'Wetherspoon's', 'Wagamama', they're full, just full of people –

JESS.

Look at them all – ridiculous...

HARRY.

And your best idea – Dans le Noir! A restaurant where you eat in the pitch darkness. People talk to me, and just think I'm an estate agent. We talked about mortgages! Then your flat, with a boiler that doesn't work, and no carpet, but everything is yours. You can do what you want, TV, Doritos, curry – I want more Jess. More of all of that.

JESS.

No one's stopping you.

HARRY.

A night, yes, but I can't do this with my life –

JESS.

Why not?

HARRY.

It's not what I was born into –

JESS.

Then change it. Look at all of this – all these people – it's absurd it still exists. The world you were born into... It's paid for by those people in Wagamama, you take money from their hard work and you spend it on portraits, palaces, and in your case flights to Las Vegas. It's not your money to spend.

HARRY.

You're very beautiful.

JESS.

Don't patronise me – listen to what I'm saying.

HARRY.

I am, I know what you're saying and I agree with it, I'm just also saying that you're beautiful as well.

JESS.

Er – calm down. My mates you met last night want nothing less than the abolition of the monarchy.

HARRY.

Yes I know.

JESS.

They also said under no circumstance was I to get off with you.

HARRY.

Don't then.

JESS.

Don't worry. I won't. It's been a great night. Hope you've had something to think about. I'll... see you.

*Beat.*

HARRY.

It's just you really look like you want to kiss me.

JESS.

Yeah, but I don't.

*They get closer.*

Oh fuck it.

*They kiss.*

*Enter JAMES.*

JAMES.

Oh! Excuse me, Your Highness. I'm interrupting.

HARRY.

What? No. This is James Carbury Reiss

JAMES.

Cadbury –

HARRY.

Cadbury Reiss, the Press Adviser for the Palace. He's worked for my father for twenty

JAMES.

Thirty

HARRY.

Thirty years. I know him really well. This is Jessica.

JAMES.

Pleased to meet you. How do you know the Prince?

JESS.

We met in a club.

JAMES.

Lovely.

HARRY.

Yeah, we haven't been to sleep since two days ago – James, we went to Sainsbury's. You know what Sainsbury's is?

JAMES.

I do.

HARRY.

It was the middle of the night and we just shopped for stuff. I got a Scotch egg.

JAMES.

I see. Were your security present to ensure there was no footage taken?

HARRY.

James it's not like that –

JAMES.

Miss Jessica, may I ask what you do for a living?

JESS.

Student.

JAMES.

Of.

JESS.

Art.

JAMES.

Art.

JESS.

Yes, I'm currently exploring Islam's relationship to pornography.

JAMES.

Do you see the relationship with Prince Henry of Wales lasting a long

time?

JESS.

With who?

JAMES.

Harry, how well do you know the young lady?

HARRY.

Really well. We've talked all night, about everything, she's brilliant.

JAMES.

What's her surname?

HARRY.

What?... Her name's Jess.

JAMES.

Jess what?

*Beat.*

Highness. Your grandmother the Queen for nearly seventy years has recently passed away. The country's in a position that very few people have ever experienced before. This is perhaps the most unstable moment the Royal Family will face.

HARRY.

So?

JAMES.

So... perhaps a conversation should be had about timing.

HARRY.

...

JESS.

What does that mean?

JAMES.

Your Highness.

*He goes.*

JESS.

Right. That. That there. Is why I'm not getting off with you. I've had enough, see you later Harry.



HARRY.

No wait. Stay. I... I want you to stay.

JESS.

Why?

*She turns to leave, but WILLIAM enters with KATE.*

HARRY.

Oh –

JESS.

What?

HARRY.

My brother and his wife – please. Just... Be nice.

*They make to go the other way but WILLIAM calls to them.*

WILLIAM.

Ah Harry, there you are! They said you'd been  
Discovered parading round the Palace grounds

HARRY.

And now we're leaving thanks a lot, goodbye.

KATE.

But wait, we haven't met, always the same  
With Harry, must be in his training some  
Efficiency of drill or army thought  
Means he forgets his manners. Hi. I'm Kate.  
And this my husband William –

HARRY.

No wait –

She doesn't understand, she's deaf and dumb.  
Not dumb, that much, a bit, she speaks sometimes  
But chooses when, unfortunately now  
Is such a moment she can't talk. And since  
She's deaf as well, she didn't hear a word  
You said, that's why she isn't smiling much,  
And looking at me in that funny way.  
We really should be going though, bye, bye –

JESS.

Yeah okay hi. Of course I know who you are. Fuck. 'William and Kate.'  
Jesus.

WILLIAM.

This is unusual.

HARRY.

I'm just showing her the Palace –

KATE.

Are you from Reading?

JESS.

Er... yeah. Why?

KATE.

Heard the accent. Me too! Well not – like it was a village nearby

JESS.

I'm from Purley.

KATE.

Purley! We used to go there sometimes and hang out on the weir.

JESS.

We did that too. Smoked a bit of weed. Didn't know you were from there.

KATE.

Fuck yeah!

*The boys look at KATE. Surprised.*

HARRY.

We're going to bed.

WILLIAM.

Okay.

HARRY.

I mean separately. Separate beds.

WILLIAM.

I'm not really interested. Good to meet you Jess.

JESS.

You too. 'William.' Fucking hell... Weirdest. Day. Ever.

HARRY *and* JESS *go*.

KATE.

Perhaps just as you hoped he's growing up  
She seemed unlike his normal horsey girls  
So thin to point of being starved, and young  
Like twenty-one with millions to inherit  
This Jess I liked, she's rather down to earth.

WILLIAM.

She swore a lot.

KATE.

And so did I, in fact  
Before I was with you my mouth was dirt  
I couldn't go two words without obscenity.  
But what's the matter husband, since we sat  
And had expansive breakfast, while our King,  
Did talk, you seem distract and pensive-like.

WILLIAM.

When offered what he's wanted for so long  
I thought he'd seize the moment, and renewed,  
Go greet the people, smiling, talking with  
The press to so ensure the public know  
The man who is about to hold the crown.  
Instead by all accounts and what I've seen  
He stays inside, just reading books, and bills  
It isn't what I hoped.

MR EVANS *enters*.

MR EVANS.

Oh Lord, good William and Kate, they said  
I was to wait, and soon the King would join.  
They didn't mention you were settled here  
As well. I'll quickly go and sit elsewhere.

KATE.

Mr Evans, stay a moment, please, we just  
Were taking time to look upon the walls

MR EVANS.

The walls, Duchess?

KATE.

Indeed, for there in paint  
And brush, the very best of kings and queens  
From days ago. Together they narrate  
A story of succession, of a change.

MR EVANS.

Yes. Indeed. It is a time of change, that's true.

KATE.

But sir – you look so pale, distraught, you must  
Sit down, we'd rather that, than have you faint.

MR EVANS.

You're kind to me.

KATE.

So sudden, what's the cause?

MR EVANS.

You will forgive me if I do not give  
The detail of my conference, it is  
A matter of some delicacy, I must  
Not tell you, much as that is what I'd like.

KATE.

But if it causes such distress –

WILLIAM.

Of course.

We understand and will not press on you.  
Perhaps some water to refresh your throat  
And mind, in readiness for meeting here  
My father?

MR EVANS.

Thanks. Again, you're both so kind.

WILLIAM *exits*.

KATE.

This must be something virulent indeed  
That does affect the King as strongly as  
Prime Minister. For William himself,  
Did just a minute hence, remark he thought  
That Charles seemed quite as out of sorts as you.  
Perhaps it is an illness passing round?

MR EVANS.

No illness, Duchess no, a matter that  
Need only trouble him and I, for now...

KATE.

For now?

MR EVANS.

Why yes, because in truth it will  
If forced in time cause problems for us all.

KATE.

Please tell me what. Perhaps I might  
Relieve the harshness of this mystery sore.

*A beat. MR EVANS shows her the bill.*

MR EVANS.

In reading here, you mustn't tell a soul,  
What's written or not written by the King.

*She reads. WILLIAM enters with a glass of water.*

WILLIAM.

Here Mr Evans, water, fetched and got  
By careful hand of Prince of Wales.  
But Kate what on that paper makes  
That look? Which from experience I know  
Tends doom and fury from your normally soft  
And poised face. You seem distressed. Here –

KATE.

Yes, read. I see now why our Minister's  
Concerned. I take it this is not a fake.

MR EVANS.

Brought by butler, phone call did confirm  
The fact that Charles has marked it there himself.  
And I as people's leader come to say  
This will not stand, he must allow the bill.  
To pass both signed and unamended.

KATE.

But William, why would your father now,  
Just days and weeks into his reign decide  
To interfere so crassly in affairs of State?  
My husband, what say you?

WILLIAM.

Nothing.

KATE.

Say what?

Say more. For nothing comes of nothing said.

WILLIAM.

My father's King. He may have reason that  
We do not know, or understand as yet.  
Our loyalty lies to serve the wishes of  
His Majesty, and here in ink is writ  
His want in black and white. So that is that.

KATE.

But Mr Evans!

WILLIAM.

Stands his ground as right  
He must in representing those whose votes  
Empower him to lead. But we as son  
And daughter of the Crown will only give  
Support, and leave dispute to those who have  
A stake in what is being argued on.

KATE.

You have a stake. Much more than most.

*Enter* CHARLES.

CHARLES.

So here you are, all met. We've Kate, my son  
Prime Minister as well. I surely hope  
The Prince of Wales and Duchess welcomed you  
And made you comfortable. Well, have they? Yes?

MR EVANS.

They have Your Highness. For when thirsty I  
Did mention water, Prince of Wales did then  
Go fetch it thus himself, and bring it hence.

CHARLES.

A future king waits butler-like upon  
The people! That awaits us all, perhaps,  
A monarchy reduced to smiling dolls.  
Like waitresses in diners themed towards  
The stars of Hollywood, we are dressed up,  
And earn our cheque by roller-skating round.

MR EVANS.

It was a kindness sir, unasked by me  
But given thus, made more the man I think.

WILLIAM.

We will depart, allowing you to talk.

KATE.

Goodbye Your Highness, and Prime Minister,  
We'll see you soon, I'm sure, we will.

*They go.*

CHARLES.

Well Mr Evans here you are, and there,  
You hold the way I feel about your law.

MR EVANS.

Firstly, it is my fault that when we met  
I failed to help you understand the way  
The voice of monarch has effect. It is –

CHARLES.

You're patronising now, that's worse, at least

Before you made assumption that I knew  
The role of Crown, and knowing thus, did step  
Across the line, but now you name me fool.

MR EVANS.

No sir, it's not what I intend at all  
But how can I progress with such an act?  
You hope I'll take it back to Parliament?

CHARLES.

You take it back, you say that there is fault  
In how the bill is drafted, say you've thought  
Again. The House does then once more debate  
And having done, whatever come of that  
I will accept and sign, without delay.

MR EVANS.

But with respect, you've not authority  
To refuse our will like this, you're not elect.

CHARLES.

I worry that, in time to come, this will,  
Have greater consequence than you  
Or I can tell, that maybe –

MR EVANS.

Forgive me sir to interrupt, it's not  
The content here discussed, but just the fact  
You will not sign. The Opposition too,  
With me agree that even though they did  
Not want the bill, and would not have it law –

CHARLES.

You've talked to Mr Stevens?  
And what said he?

MR EVANS.

The same. That you must sign.  
*A beat.*

CHARLES.

But yes, of course he said I must.



MR EVANS.

Your Highness, have you thought what people will  
When hearing that you have reserved assent,  
Be wont to do? When as they'll see it, you  
Have stolen every vote they've cast, and used  
The crown to unilaterally have your way.

CHARLES.

You think if they did know the facts, they'd side  
In numbers more with you, than with their King?

MR EVANS.

I think it would be bad for all concerned  
If word of any part of this did reach  
Outside these walls. Division would result  
I beg you sir, let's talk some more as months  
And years go on, but here it is. Perhaps  
You can just get the pen and sign the bill.

CHARLES.

You have not changed a word?

MR EVANS.

It is the same.

*A pause.*

Were there solution evident that could  
Enable both of us to have our way  
I'd take it in an instant for I know  
You're acting out of conscience.

CHARLES.

That's right, and in good conscience I have thought  
That come the moment, surely I could sign.  
But when the pen approaches paper thus,  
About to store for ever my assent  
And tell the future generations that  
King Charles did let this happen, and, in proof  
Applied the value of his name beneath,  
The pen dries up, my hand it cannot write.  
For if my name is given through routine

And not because it represents my view  
Then soon I'll have no name, and nameless I  
Have not myself, and having not myself,  
Possess not mouth nor tongue nor brain, instead  
I am an empty vessel, waiting for  
Instruction, soulless and uncorporate,  
And like I saw on television when  
I was a younger man, I'm Charles no more  
The human being, but transformed into  
*A Spitting Image* puppet, lying prone  
Upon the table waiting for some man  
To come and then inserting his own hand,  
Do operate the image of the King  
Pretending life, a simulation of  
The outer skin with nothing in the heart.

MR EVANS.

This is your role, you surely must have known –

CHARLES.

But I'm not sure if ever in the past,  
That there was such a bill, that changed the way  
That speech is granted freedom. Not since  
The news was born, has Government and State  
Been there allowed to use the threat of jail  
To stop the presses, based on what they deem  
Is unacceptable. The Queen did not  
In all her years bethroned, face laws like this  
To pass.

MR EVANS.

I do agree for in her time  
She faced far greater revolution when  
She lost an Empire, granted that the law  
On homosexuality be changed  
She oversaw the alteration from  
The unions, mines and factories that stood  
For generations to a world  
That, Thatcherated, Reaganised, did place

The profit higher value than the pride  
Belonging to the man who travels day  
By day upon the Clapham omnibus.  
And through all this, when laws arrived from those  
Prime Ministers she hated, doing things  
Of which I'm sure she never would approve.  
She still did sign, respected all the votes  
Empowering those elect to make the law  
She always signed. She always gave assent.

CHARLES.

Well I cannot.

MR EVANS.

And I in turn cannot  
As British leader stand to let this go.  
I'm sorry sir, but if I leave this room  
Without King Charles imprinted here below,  
I cannot keep it secret and will tell  
The world that simply you refuse to sign.  
And in addition I'll ensure this bill  
Becomes the law without your royal assent.

CHARLES.

Your first assurance, making public what,  
Their newly crowned King has failed to do  
Is your prerogative, so go ahead,  
But second that you can pass laws yourself  
Without consulting Head of State is wrong.  
My lawyers are agreed. You may not like  
My medicine but you cannot legally  
Dispute its high authority.  
Redraft the law with changes that defend  
The independence of the press and send  
It back and I will sign immediately.

MR EVANS.

Your Highness, no.

*Pause.*

You're sure that this is what you want to do?

CHARLES.

Without my voice, and spirit, I am dust,  
This is not what I want, but what I must.

MR EVANS *goes*.

## ACT THREE

### 3.1.

MR EVANS *addresses the people outside No. 10 Downing Street*.

MR EVANS.

You will know, the King must grant assent  
To any bills that, voted on by due  
Elected members of both Houses here  
Seek passage to United Kingdom law.  
But, with the bill concerning privacy  
And statutory regulation of  
The press, the King has unexpectedly  
Refused to grant assent, on grounds that he  
Does not concur with what it does intend.  
I have done all I can, to ease his mind.  
But he is not persuaded, and despite  
His certain knowledge that the royal assent  
Is ceremonial, and not a tool,  
He has continued to withhold his pen.  
We're currently negotiating still  
In order to progress, but here I say  
Importantly, that first we must defend  
Democracy itself, and leave aside  
Our diverse views on what the bill contains.  
So to this end, I will here make a pledge  
That either printed with the royal assent

Or standing firm without his regal sign  
The measure will be law within the month.

### 3.2

CHARLES *speaks from Buckingham Palace, to the people, on television.*

CHARLES.

I'm speaking from the Palace to you all,  
Reluctantly, tonight. I had a hope  
My ministers and I could find a way  
To circumvent a public feud like this.  
But driven by my conscience, I have declined to pass  
A law that would give Government the right  
And power to restrict, and then decide  
What is acceptable to say in print.  
Once fragile politicians can,  
While claiming public sensitivity,  
Go censoring what's writ or not, it will  
Be easier to govern as corrupt  
Than bother being held unto account.  
And therefore I, who stands outside the rough  
And tumble of expedience,  
Do caution them, and ask they think again.  
So far, they have refused, so now do I,  
As King, and servant to the populace,  
Request your understanding, and your trust,  
That this, a rare but necessary act  
Is not me stepping too far from the throne,  
But is my duty and fulfilling what  
The king or queen is sworn by oath to do.

### 3.3

*Evening. Quiet.*

JAMES *waits, impatiently. Enter JESS.*

JAMES.

Miss Edwards. Here at last. Well better late  
Than not at all, although I don't yet know  
Your wish so maybe that's not true.

JESS.

Yeah okay.  
I need to speak, but Harry can't know

JAMES.

And here it is.

JESS.

Here's what?

JAMES.

The trouble that  
From years of managing these things I sensed  
Was brewing from the moment that we met.

JESS.

I know you don't approve of me.

JAMES.

How true.  
But I'm late home so tell me what you want.

JESS.

Increasingly there's stories in the news  
About the Prince and I. They think I'm an  
Unusual match for him, and so explore  
My past and present, calling up my friends

JAMES.

This is to be expected I'm afraid.  
There's really nothing to be done.

JESS.

I know and just so long as it's about  
My politics I'm actually fine with it.  
But there's a buried story that they will  
Uncover and would cause embarrassment

Not just to me, but to the Prince. I thought  
Perhaps you could make sure it stays  
Under the ground and not dug up

JAMES.

I see.

This story is it art you've made at all?

JESS.

It is as personal as you would fear.

JAMES.

It's for this reason I preferred the Prince  
Did stick to Sloanish fluff. At least before  
They split, his Cressida, although quite wild  
Herself, was easy to predict. But now  
He fancies you instead, so yes, what's wrong?

JESS.

Three years ago, when I was only young  
And starting out, I knew a boy called Fin  
Who was a dick if truth be told. But we,  
Because we lived in different cities then  
Did text our love, instead of meeting up.

JAMES.

Oh dear.

JESS.

That's right

JAMES.

I'm guessing where this goes.

JESS.

One day, when I was in the mood I had  
Composed a text expressing love and such,  
Which I then sent to him. But now he does  
Make contact once again, and threaten me.

JAMES.

He threatens you with one small text –

JESS.

Yeah well –

In truth it did contain additional form.

A token of my love

JAMES.

A token, right –

JESS.

For Fin had given same to me before,

And although I'm not the kind of girl

Who plays around like that, I must confess

I took a picture that... well... it was private. I was young, having fun,  
everyone does it. You know what I mean? You don't need the details –

JAMES.

I really don't.

JESS.

But he, last week, made contact and did say

He'd seen the news and since I wanted gold,

He should have his. He threatened then to send

The photo to the *Evening Standard* if

I do not pay him cash.

JAMES.

Well that's a shame.

But as I said there's little I can do

It's blackmail so you could approach police.

But they, I warn you, leak like carrier bags.

And have no love for matters royal these days.

If truly miss you wish to save the Prince

Perhaps you need to leave his side, and doing so

Take from this man the power he now has.

JESS.

Come on, if this was Harry or the King you'd do something –

JAMES.

With respect miss, you're not part of the family.



JESS.

You think I'm after money?

JAMES.

I've no idea what you're after. I thought you hated all of us.

JESS.

I do. But Harry's different. And... I don't want this to get in the way.

JAMES.

Well it seems like it has, and you have a choice.

*Enter CHARLES, with his BUTLER.*

Have you thus far met the King?

JESS.

Not yet. Oh God.

JAMES.

Then can I suggest that this is not the time.

Go now, and for the Prince's sake alone

I'll do my best to keep your story cold –

*JESS leaves, not seen by CHARLES.*

CHARLES.

Ah James, it's late. You're working hard.

JAMES.

That's true.

For with your recent stance, it's e'en more

Important that your high esteem has clear

Reflection in the mirror of the news.

CHARLES.

But what 'bout you. You find it strange that I

So often stabbed by journalistic pen

Do battle thus?

JAMES.

When you were Prince, it mattered not my view.

I simply tried to carry out what you intend.

And now I serve a king, it's e'en more

Imperative that all I do is guide

The presentation of the dish, and not  
Attempt to offer 'pinion on the food.  
Or how it should be cooked. Now I should go,  
For yes, it's late, and I am missed at home.

*He goes.*

CHARLES.

He's very loyal but can't conceal he hates  
The method and the meat of what I've done.  
Opinion polls suggest that people are  
Divided almost equally as to  
If my non-signing is within my rights.  
Or not. But that half's far more than I  
Expected would agree with me on this.  
Whatever many like to think, there is  
A wise and ancient bond between the Crown  
And population of this pleasant isle.  
It's only in the last five hundred years  
That politicians and democracy  
Have led the way in policy and meant  
The people vote for who they want to lead.  
And this is right, but unlike countries which  
Did build existence through the parliament  
This is to us, an option added on,  
Like satnav on a car, it does not come  
As standard, and the car will function well  
Without, it drives, protects, it normally goes.  
And though it's wise to pay for extra help,  
And usually the voice of the machine  
Assists us well to get from A to B,  
When lost, and crisis strikes, we soon mistrust  
These modern ways, and reach for what we know:  
We seek the map, from years before, and there  
Do stabilise and resecure our way.  
So having been unsure, if I was wise,  
To halt the progress of the bill to law,  
The people's trust has been my validation.

CAMILLA *enters*.

CAMILLA.

I stupidly had thought that once you're King  
Perhaps it would reduce the angst you feel.  
Instead your face has lines I never saw before  
And in this light your hair looks far more pale  
Than I remember. Is it worth the pain?

CHARLES.

I don't know if you're right. I do avoid  
The mirror in the last few weeks it's true,  
But in myself I feel much greater strength.

CAMILLA.

You sit there at your desk and work and read  
Which means we cancel trips that should be made  
And let down crowds who have looked forward to  
Your presence there.

CHARLES.

It is these days, when I  
Define my monarch's voice. I need the time.

CAMILLA.

But that's not what the people want. They hope  
You will arrive in person and be there.  
Remember that the fulsome praise the Queen  
Did most receive was that she always filled  
Her duties even in the latest years.  
And similar for you, remember when  
In Somerset the Levels sank beneath  
The waters of the flood, you were the first  
To wade into the problem and were met  
With clapping, admiration, and despite  
The upset there, so many smiles! For you  
Their future King had given hope where hope  
Had disappeared. And now they need the same.

*Pause.*

Dear Charles, I wasn't sure to tell you, but  
Someone waits to see you here tonight.  
I know it's late, and when I heard he had  
Arrived so unannounced I said to hold  
And let you finish dinner, then we'd see  
Your mood, before we grant him audience.

CHARLES.

Not Mr Evans? No, I'm tired, tell him –

CAMILLA.

It's

Mr Stevens waits.

*A moment.*

CHARLES.

Send him in, and leave us here to speak.

CAMILLA.

Be careful Charles, I do not trust him well.

*She goes.*

*Pause.*

*Enter MR STEVENS.*

MR STEVENS.

Your Highness, please forgive how late it is  
I was not keen to draw attention to  
The fact we have a conference tonight.

CHARLES.

I'm sure you're not, since vocally you've been  
Most critical of what I've done, despite  
A week before, within this very room,  
Assuring me of your complete support.

MR STEVENS.

Forgive me but I never offered that.  
Support in private, yes, but all I did  
Was draw attention to your rights as King.

CHARLES.

A politician's tongue you have indeed  
And weasel mouth.  
It's late. I've had enough. Cut to the chase.

MR STEVENS.

Perhaps you know that Mr Evans will  
In two days' time bring forth a bill within  
The House that makes it clear a law cannot  
Be halted waiting for the King's assent.

CHARLES.

...

MR STEVENS.

This bill is sure to pass. And subsequent  
The bill of privacy. And from then on  
Not only this particular law but all  
The legislation still to come, will not  
Appear before the monarch's eye, or pen.  
You will not only fail upon this one  
And only thing, but in fact, the Crown  
Will lose the right to speak forever more.  
So I had wondered what Your Majesty  
Did plan to fix this far erroneous course?

CHARLES.

...

MR STEVENS.

Because, you see, you only have two days.  
And I for one would not be happy that  
The influence our monarch has, is changed.

CHARLES.

Therefore you think the better evil is  
Take pen, and sign the wretched and corrupted bill?

MR STEVENS.

I would be sad that it would come to that.

CHARLES.

What then?

You speak as if you have a good idea.

*Beat.*

MR STEVENS.

Well this is why I'm not officially here

It means I can say words to you that I

Will not have said –

CHARLES.

...the politician's tongue.

MR STEVENS.

But now you see it has its purposes.

It is not up to me, to tell the King

What he has privilege to do, but if

He needed inspiration he could mull

How William the Fourth resolved a not

Entirely different situation.

*Beat.*

CHARLES.

You speak in circles. Now say what you mean.

MR STEVENS.

Your Highness no, because I am not here.

I just suggest you might research the past.

But it is late, so I should go and rest.

I have a tingling that the next few days

Will one way or another bring disrupt

Tempestuous waking sleeps unto us all.

MR STEVENS *goes.*

CHARLES.

The stakes are raised again, and now I feel

Unease, I know well the precedent

Of William the Fourth.

*A draught blows.*

It's cold tonight, I should insist they fix  
This draught that late at night blows tempests through.

*Enter GHOST.*

But no – not now, again, it is the same  
Beshrouded lady, walking through the walls  
You are not real! It cannot be! Go! Now!

GHOST.

My darling Charles your face it is so pale  
You often looked in thought, but not like this

CHARLES.

It said my name.

GHOST.

You think I didn't love you that's not true  
I always cared I always wanted best  
But you rejected me, and so away  
I went.

CHARLES.

Diana...?

GHOST.

But in all that time  
I never hoped, I never thought that you –

CHARLES.

What do you mean, you never thought –

GHOST.

Never reckoned on the fact that you as Crown  
Who worries 'bout the way you look, and stroke  
Your hair down into place, and nervously  
Do touch above your lip when getting sad.  
Will be the greatest King we ever have.

CHARLES.

The greatest King?  
But stop, please wait! I didn't understand!  
Explain!  
But no, it drifts away, like mist at dawn.

Oh God, if anyone did see me now  
Their brand-new King, who, sleepless runs towards  
The made-up nonsense in his head, but yet...  
She is quite beautiful, I know the walk.

*The GHOST goes.*

This is psychology so manifest  
If shown upon the stage I would cry out  
A fraud. Simplicity! And badly done!  
'The greatest King', what did that mean?  
My mother ruled for seventy years, she must  
Be counted straight away a greater Crown.  
Unless implied the ghost a single deed  
That's done or not. A punctuation that,  
Making stronger impact hitting once  
Does with surprising shock and awe achieve  
What slow experience could not.  
Perhaps there's wisdom in insomnia  
And sleep does drive me where, awake, I fear.  
In sense, I fold and pay the heavy debt.  
But madness says to play, and up the bet!

*Exit CHARLES.*

### 3.4

*Night. WILLIAM enters in his pyjamas.*

WILLIAM.

It is a strange and ambulous night  
I lay flat out but then there was a noise,  
That woke me in a second, high it was  
A scream I thought, the kind that I have heard  
When women inconsolable and full  
Of tears do try to breathe. But not for years,  
Since I remember through the door and walls  
Of my lost mother's bedroom we could hear



Her cry herself to sleep at night, have I  
Encountered such a shriek as that. I waited there,  
Alert for it to shrilly sound again  
But it did not. So then I tried to sleep  
But found my heart and mind were racing wild.  
So I not sleeping, did instead lay there  
Upon the covers and while Catherine snored  
Went over what my father does intend.  
The more I thought, the more my sleep became  
A distant dream, and then I suddenly  
Was sure that every second passed did risk  
A fracture growing 'tween the Crown and State

*Enter HARRY.*

You're never up this early in the morn  
Unless for you it's still the night before

HARRY.

I'm sure I heard a scream.

WILLIAM.

And so did I

HARRY.

So like our mother's voice it freaked me out.

WILLIAM.

I've checked and there is nothing going on.

HARRY.

Well that's the story of my life.

WILLIAM.

You mean...

HARRY.

Once woke I lay and thought I've had enough.  
You will be King, and Kate your Queen.  
And even if our father's making waves  
At least he is allowed to choose his course  
But I am doomed for ever just to chase  
Your wake, a ginger joke, bereft of value.

WILLIAM.

The way our father acts the joke may be  
On all of us.

HARRY.

But then I turned to speak  
To Jess, who slept tonight with me, and found  
That she had gone, and in her place a note.  
Which read she thought that it would never work.  
She would embarrass me, she said.

WILLIAM.

I thought your Jessica  
Did cheer your mood, the two of you had fun –

HARRY.

We have, she DOES. And not just fun. We have  
Done things that most do every day, but I  
Assumed were not within my compass  
Royal, she has unblinkered me, and op'd  
My eyes. The world is wider now, more depth  
And shape, but with this new perspective I  
Do only seem more trapped, more narrowed down  
By this, the family. I thought she might  
Be glowing exit from this regal hole  
And 'scape me from a life of humorous  
Periphery, but now, upset, she's gone.

*Pause.*

WILLIAM.

It is a passing mood. There will be girls  
To come, there always have before, but if  
Our father's crisis black does shadow more  
I hope that I can turn, as I have always done,  
To you, and you'll be there, already at  
My side, the pact our mother made us make  
As resolute as on the day was sworn.

HARRY.

What was the scream?

WILLIAM.

I do not know.

*Beat.*

HARRY.

Here's Kate, she'll make me worse, I'll go  
And find a greasy spoon, and maybe when  
I'm back our father will have blown this all  
To kingdom come and I'll be free at last.

*He goes. Enter KATE.*

KATE.

What is it husband troubles you like this?

WILLIAM.

The trouble that you had me countenance  
So long ago, but which I did ignore.  
You're right of course, my father's waited for  
Too many years to call the crown his own.  
And now he overestimates its worth,  
And makes it ruler over King himself.  
So Gollum-like he, craven, fears to sign  
This bill, in case the precious crown shouts 'Weakling, traitor king.'

KATE.

And therefore you must go persuade at once  
Your father of the damage he inflicts.

WILLIAM.

You know I cannot make the case myself.  
For since Mum died he's wondered if myself  
And Harry are more loyal to mother lost  
Than to our father who survived and aged.  
To question him on such a subject, when he  
I know, will be embattled and besieged  
Will in a second make him draw away  
Instead, I have called forth Prime Minister.

KATE.

You mean he'll be here in the morning, right?

WILLIAM.

Why no I called for him at once tonight.

SERVANT *enters*.

SERVANT.

Your Highness Mr Evans waits outside.

KATE.

Well right on cue, he's punctual as well.

WILLIAM.

Go back to bed, and leave all this to me.

KATE.

I will not go, for surely you'll be King  
Some day, but on that day I am as much  
The Queen, and I do not intend to be  
A silent partner in that regal match.  
Please show him in!

SERVANT.

I will Duchess.

*He goes.*

WILLIAM.

Before, when sleeping, did you hear a scream?

KATE.

What scream?

WILLIAM.

A high and terrifying sound.

KATE.

I didn't hear a thing. A scream? Who screamed?

MR EVANS *enters*.

Good Mr Evans what a kindness shown  
To rise from bed at early hour thus.  
I fear my family does cause you pains.

MR EVANS.

My lady I cannot pretend that, yes,

My life would be a joy in recent weeks  
If Britain was republic.

WILLIAM.

I hear that you will call tomorrow all  
The members of the House and then propose  
Historic changes to the way the Crown  
Is given power to confer or not the law.

MR EVANS.

Ideally I'd preserve our current mode.  
But as things are I haven't got a choice.

WILLIAM.

Will you consider waiting for a week  
And giving time to let my father change?

MR EVANS.

Already we have waited, and he changes not.

KATE.

But what if William went at earliest hour  
To see his father and persuaded him.

WILLIAM.

No Kate, I can't. That's not –

KATE.

What time's the vote?

MR EVANS.

It's twelve o'clock.

WILLIAM.

My Catherine I did make it clear I'll not  
Inflict the same division on ourselves  
That currently does tear at our country.  
Instead I wondered if Prime Minister  
Might have one more attempt. I cannot think  
That if my father truly understood –

MR EVANS.

He comprehends it well. He will not sign.  
I have no choice.

KATE.

My nervous future King!  
You must go now and tell him what to do.  
Because it's not just him, or you, you risk,  
By sitting here and doing nothing thus,  
It is our children, and their children hence  
And after that all generations royal  
That are to come in future years, they all,  
Do look to you insisting you defend  
The Crown against this fool's indulgence.  
I say this not as future Queen but just  
As British woman proud of both my State  
And King, with understanding that it is  
A balance in a contradiction  
'Tween those elected and those born to rule  
That is unique and does protect and make us all.

WILLIAM.

It wouldn't change a thing. He is too proud.

KATE.

Then think not only of persuading him  
But finding lever so he must agree.

WILLIAM.

What lever?

KATE.

Say the thing that must be said.  
The fact that both of us command support  
That does near thrice outweigh the aged King  
And if we wanted might begin to itch  
In waiting for the throne.

WILLIAM.

You stop right now.

MR EVANS.

I think perhaps that I will leave you both.

KATE.

I say what you two gentlemen will not.

There is another way to solve this thing.

WILLIAM.

That is the opposite of all that I believe.  
I'll never step across my father's right.

KATE.

In that case Mr Evans, fare thee well.  
Good luck tomorrow casting off the last  
Remains of ancient and outdated royals.

MR EVANS.

I'm sorry it has come to this. I really am.

MR EVANS *goes*.

WILLIAM.

You did embarrass him.

KATE.

He's fine and laughs at us as we decline.  
My husband look at me! My love for you  
Is full and as the moment that we met.  
I do not think you weak at all but *wrong*.  
Become the man I know you are and act.  
If you do not, you are cut out of law.

WILLIAM.

I am not King.

*She looks at him, then goes.*

My wife knows not that in the years before  
My grandmother did pass away,  
She sat with me for hours at a time  
And because I made a point to ask,  
Did talk to me about what she had learned.  
She told me that temptation lies as royal  
To act, and speak, and lead, and always move,  
When actually the greatest influence  
That we can wield is through our standing still  
Not rash, and never changing, a great Crown

Is made by dint of always being there,  
I'll keep my silence. And let life unfold.

*A noise.*

But what was that? Perhaps it's Kate come back?

*Another noise.*

But not from her direction, maybe something –

*The GHOST appears.*

Oh God, a glimmering and hov'ring form

GHOST.

Oh William!

WILLIAM.

She cries my name, I know

That voice.

GHOST.

Oh William, you look so old

I never thought I'd see my boy like this

A man become so bald and middle-aged.

WILLIAM.

Mum?

*The GHOST touches his face.*

*He cries.*

GHOST.

But still the face remains the same, and there

The eyes hold kindness, and intelligence.

You'll be the greatest King we ever have.

*The GHOST hugs him, then makes to leave.*

WILLIAM.

Don't go!

*The GHOST leaves.*

The greatest King? That's what she said...



This comes of waking wrongly in the night  
I'll back to bed, in hope the sleep resolves  
The problems that awake I cannot solve.

*He goes.*

### 3.5

*A kebab van.*

HARRY, *exhausted, goes up to it.*

*There's no one there. He bangs on the side.*

PAUL *appears – he's bright, upbeat.*

PAUL.

Yeah mate?

HARRY.

A kebab please.

PAUL.

Ooo. Too late. Switched it off.

HARRY.

Please... I'll pay more.

PAUL.

...Okay okay. Doner?

HARRY.

Yeah.

PAUL *starts serving the kebab.*

PAUL.

Long night?

HARRY.

I... I think I might quit my job.

PAUL.

Ah – be careful about that. Way things are, I mean we all have shit jobs, don't we? Maybe it's different for you. You sound a bit posh, don't want

to be rude but perhaps your mum and dad can help you out or something

—

HARRY.

My mum's dead.

PAUL.

Oh right. Mine too. I suppose everybody's mother dies one day.

HARRY.

Yes.

PAUL.

Even the King. His mother dies, he doesn't cry, what's that about?

Why do you want to quit then?

HARRY.

I think I'm in love.

PAUL.

Pretty girl?

HARRY.

Yeah.

PAUL.

You want to run off with her? Start a new life.

HARRY.

Maybe.

PAUL.

Just warming up – that's four eighty.

HARRY *pays with a five-pound note.* PAUL *looks at it.*

Out of date now innit?

HARRY.

Suppose so.

PAUL *starts to cut the kebab meat.*

PAUL.

You know since she died. World's gone mad. I swear. Every night, people have this look. Bit like you – They come here, they want a kebab, a Coke,

and it's like they're terrified. And I think I know why. They don't know where they live. They don't know what Britain is any more.

HARRY.

What do you mean?

PAUL.

Slice by slice, Britain's less and less. You cut the army, that's one bit gone, squeeze the NHS, have Scotland threaten independence, the Post Office gone, the pubs shut, less and less. Smaller all the time and when does Britain get so cut down, that it's not Britain any more?

HARRY.

You think that's now?

PAUL.

Well the Queen's dead. If you take enough layers away, what have you got left, underneath, know what I mean? Maybe she was what held it together.

HARRY.

I've got no layers left.

PAUL.

What? Here you are.

*He gives him the kebab.*

Where's this girl of yours then?

HARRY.

She left me.

PAUL.

You love her.

HARRY.

I... yeah. I think I do.

PAUL.

That's something then. Find her. Night.

*PAUL shuts up the van again. HARRY eats the kebab, walking off –*

### 3.6

*The House of Commons.*

MEMBERS *enter on both sides of the House.*

MR EVANS *and* MR STEVENS *face each other across the despatch box.*

*The* SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE *rises.*

SPEAKER.

Order!

Order!

This House will come to order now! At once!  
We here discuss a move to raise ourselves  
Out from the overseeing shadow that  
For centuries has held us to account  
And so it's not the moment to become  
A bunch of children, stamping up and down.  
Both major party leaders now will speak.  
And then we'll vote at once and there forthwith  
If passed, by special measures made, the bill  
Will straight go to the House of Lords who wait  
Upon us even now to take this vote.  
So first the Leader of the Opposition.

MR STEVENS.

I thank you Mr Speaker and because  
We know the facts upon the matter well.  
I will unusually be very brief.

*Shouts.*

Our Parliament exists to make sure that  
The people of our country do decide  
The codes and principles by which they live.  
It is a contract made between a man  
Or woman, and the State, by which both sides  
Must there agree, that citizen does have  
A voice and in return will keep the law.  
And so an intervention in this way  
That so removes the voice, but law remains

Is absolutely wrong, and in this House  
Must every vote support this vital bill.

*He sits. Cheers.*

SPEAKER.

The Prime Minister!

MR EVANS.

I thank the Right Honourable Member for  
His correct and well-articulated views.  
I make assumption that we all will vote  
In favour of this bill, for we all here now  
Have made a choice to come and represent  
Constituents to have their say in this  
Their House, and give their weight and 'fluence to  
The shaping of the government and law.  
Although we have the Crown as Head of State  
Both history and precedent do hold  
Him in his place. And now he oversteps  
So we must act and not impertinent  
Or rude, or out of disrespect but since  
We have no other choice than to protect  
Our democratic, British, way of life.

*Cheers. He sits.*

SPEAKER.

And now by ancient process, we divide the House and –

*Three knocks.*

We will divide the House to vote, ayes to the –

*Another three knocks.*

Please will someone, before we vote, go see  
What causes this infernal knocking there!

*Another knock.*

Where is security!? Call the police!

*An ORDERLY in a suit opens the door and CHARLES walks in, without  
a crown, but regally dressed, and with the sceptre.*

*The MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT stand.*

*CHARLES stands opposite the SPEAKER.*

CHARLES.

Empowered by ancient decree I do,  
As King of England, Northern Ireland, Wales  
And Scotland, use my royal prerogative  
To here dissolve the Parliament at once.

*A pause.*

*Shouting from the MEMBERS.*

SPEAKER.

Order! Order! I will have silence now!

*The shouting dies down.*

CHARLES.

This noise demeans you all. Is this the space  
Where public will is spoke and heard, or just  
A stand for juvenile and selfish squall?  
Through petty theft, and fighting here amongst  
Yourselves, you've lost the population's trust.  
I am not prone to certainty but you  
Have drawn that measure in my unsure heart.  
Unlike you all, I'm born and raised to rule.  
I do not choose, but like an Albion oak  
I'm sown in British soil, and grown not for  
Myself but reared with single purpose meant.  
Whilst you have small constituency support  
Which gusts and falls, as does the wind  
My cells and organs constitute this land  
Devoted to entire populace  
Of now, of then, and all those still to come.

And in their interest, in their voice  
The Speaker knows it is within my right,  
To sack my ministers and call a fresh  
Election. All debate will stop at once.

You will dissolve, and then prepare to stand  
As members to the people once again.

*Shouting of the House.*

SPEAKER.

Order! Order! Gentlemen! Please!

*The shouting continues.*

CHARLES *takes his sceptre and bangs it hard on the floor.*

*Silence.*

CHARLES.

My Speaker, will you here confirm to them  
That what I do is well within my right  
And anointed power, to, as King, demand?

*A pause.*

SPEAKER.

Your Highness...

...if this is what you want.

Then this, you can, as King, command.

*Shouting. CHARLES turns and goes.*

*Interval.*

## ACT FOUR

### 4.1

*The sound of a protest throughout the scene.*

*Enter FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN, handing out papers to passing  
COMMUTERS, PROTESTERS, etc., throughout.*

FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN.

*Free Standard. Free Standard!*

*In times like this a paper feels absurd.*

Unless we could reprint the articles  
In every second, news contained in here  
Is counted history. When King does march  
And Parliament is forcibly dissolved  
Free *Standard*. Free *Standard*!  
When Labour leader says we should remove  
The King, and Tory says he isn't sure.  
It's changing every second and my point of view  
Is make him sign somehow and then we're done.  
But I'm alone. Most people are enraged.

*A MONARCHIST PROTESTER – wearing country gear – tweed and a flatcap, enters. She has a placard – ‘God Save the King’. She has a bloody nose and is panicked – running away – looking round. Terrified.*

They march at day, and then at night they camp  
Outside the Palace, shout against the King.  
Although there's only a few thousand now,  
The numbers grow. And sometimes there's a brave  
Supporter of the King who tries to take  
Them on and this has sparked some violence –

*A roar of the crowd and a group of ANTI-MONARCHIST PROTESTERS storm the stage. The MONARCHIST panics, throws the banner to the ground and runs away. The ANTI-MONARCHISTS head off, in pursuit.*

*Another ANTI-MONARCHIST watches them go. He's wearing a ‘V for Vendetta’ mask, carrying a banner: Charles with a Hitler moustache. A slogan ‘Charles Out’. He takes out a pre-rolled fag, puts it in his mouth without taking off the mask. A moment to himself.*

But none of this is on page one. Oh yeah,  
It takes up pages two to twenty-four,  
And should, because the very basis of  
Our democratic rights are put at risk,  
But still, it's not so visual, so on  
Page one instead does show in colour a  
Not unconnected photograph, that will  
Shift more of these than picture of the King.



*The protester takes off the mask, and we see it's JESS.*

Wait – do I know you?

JESS.

Don't think so –

FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN.

Yeah... wait...

*She looks at the front page of her paper. Compares it. A few  
PROTESTERS walk past and stand in a circle.*

Hang on – I do!

HARRY *enters*.

HARRY.

Hi.

JESS.

Oh... Oh come on! How did you know where I was?

HARRY.

It's all I've been doing.

JESS.

You can't be here. You might be lynched, on your own.

HARRY.

I'm not on my own.

JESS.

What?

HARRY.

Terry?

*One of the 'protesters' turns to HARRY – lifts up his woollen hat.*

TERRY.

Yes sir?

HARRY.

Everything under control.

TERRY.

Yes sir. For now.

TERRY *pulls his hat back down, undercover.*

HARRY.

That's how I found you. I know why you left. I saw the story.  
It's okay.

JESS.

Harry – look, on the front cover is the whole story of our relationship. None of my friends are talking to me. They think I'm a traitor. Every second people recognise me and laugh. And I never wanted any of it. I don't want to be photographed, or laughed at. I don't want to be famous and I don't want anything to do with that. Or you. Not any more.

HARRY.

You mean that?

*She puts the fag out, throws the banner away.*

JESS.

Yeah. Just... go home.

HARRY.

But I don't... I don't know what to do without you.

JESS.

You'll be okay.

HARRY.

There must be a way.

JESS.

You're a prince. And you always will be. Sorry mate.

*She kisses him.*

*She picks up her banner. A growing chant from the crowd.*

TERRY *turns to* HARRY.

TERRY.

Sir we should be moving.

HARRY.

Jess... I've got an idea. Come with me. Back to the Palace.

JESS.

No.

HARRY.

One last chance.

Please.

Give me an hour.

*The crowd getting louder.*

You're very beautiful.

JESS.

I'm a Republican.

HARRY.

I know. But you're beautiful as well.

*The crowd scream.*

Please.

JESS *relents and goes with* HARRY. TERRY *follows.*

*The sound of the crowd gets louder and louder.*

*The FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN looks apprehensive.*

FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN (*quietly*).

Maybe she's right... Time to go home...

*And she leaves.*

## 4.2

*Buckingham Palace.*

*The sound of the crowd outside.*

*Enter* SIR GORDON – *Chief of the Defence Staff, and* CHARLES.

CHARLES.

Sir Gordon, thanks indeed for coming here

At such short notice, would you like a drink?

SIR GORDON.

Your Highness, no, I am refreshed, and keen

To hear how I can be of use.

CHARLES.

The crowds  
Outside. You hear? It's every day.

SIR GORDON.

I know.

CHARLES.

They're passionate, and from what I can tell  
Extremely keen for my untimely death.

SIR GORDON.

They're unemployed and students, all they want  
Is good excuse to make some noise, it's fine.

CHARLES.

I am reminded of that day, the year  
It was that I was married to Diana.  
And on the Trooping of the Colour when  
The Queen was leading, riding out in front  
And trotting down the Mall in glorious sun  
There came from somewhere in the crowd six shots,  
Aimed at my mother, echoing around.  
The horse was panicked and reared up at once  
In contrast to the ever-steady Queen,  
Who calmed the beast and simply carried on,  
While round her much too late, the guards did run  
And startled like the horse, did throw themselves  
Into the crowd, to find the armed man.  
Of course we learnt he fired blanks that day  
And merely wanted fame. But now I think,  
It's likely when, in time, those shots are aimed  
At me, I'll only get to hear the first.

SIR GORDON.

It's natural sir that you will be concerned  
When constantly this rabble rave and shout.  
But rest assured you are protected well.

CHARLES.

How many guards are standing there outside?

SIR GORDON.

Because you are in residence, we have  
At all times four, in front, and then of course  
There is the royal police within the walls,  
And extra agents that protect yourself.

CHARLES.

It is the guards in front that bother me.  
Please have them tripled, at all times I want  
Twelve men to there be visible to all.

SIR GORDON.

Your Majesty, these men in front are there  
For tourist ceremony, not defence.  
If it's your safety that concerns, may I –

CHARLES.

It is my preservation and I know  
That will be served by what the public see.  
At times like this my greatest enemies  
Stand not within the crowd outside but there  
In Whitehall, waiting for the slightest glimpse  
Of weakness. So...

SIR GORDON.

I see. You want a show of strength.

CHARLES.

Sir Gordon, these are, in truth, strange days.  
And so, when timely pressed, you'll need to know  
Precisely where, to whom your loyalty lies.  
If Government, of course, I'd understand.  
But possibly you think, like me, that King  
Can on occasion ask the Parliament  
To reconsider what they mean to do.  
For that is all I ask. To think again.  
Sir Gordon, in the end it's up to you.

*Beat.*

SIR GORDON.

My loyalty?

*Beat.*

Perhaps I can suggest Your Majesty  
That in these times of severely heightened threat  
It would be wise not only to increase  
The armed guard that stand outside the gate  
From four to twenty-eight, from day to night  
But in addition maybe we should park  
Upon the terrace at the front, a tank.  
Or similar large and armoured vehicle.  
It is important that we send a message out  
That makes it clear the King's supported well.  
Because you're right, indeed, that when we join  
The forces we all swear that come what may  
We will protect the King, and so we will.

*Enter BUTLER.*

BUTLER.

The Leader of the Opposition sir.

CHARLES.

Send him in.

*Enter MR STEVENS.*

MR STEVENS.

Your Highness and Sir Gordon greetings both  
I promised to update Your Majesty  
On how the House of Commons does respond  
Toward the intervention of the King.

CHARLES.

Yes. Well?

MR STEVENS.

It is a mixed bag, of course  
There are those on both sides who strongly feel  
That we as signed-up members of the House  
Did swear we would obey the law as written down  
And not, like children, wait until the day  
It didn't suit, and then decide in fact

We'd rather not. I'd say that is how we  
Conservatives do feel. That we should go  
Back to the people and, as you've decreed,  
Seek re-election to the House, and then  
If we're successful, think about a change.

CHARLES.

Or not.

MR STEVENS.

Or not, precisely right indeed.  
Unfortunately those of Labour, and  
For what they're worth, the other parties too  
Are resolute that we should not dissolve  
And should instead in contravention of  
The royal decree continue with the House,  
And make a legislation that will stop  
The King from interference in the State.

CHARLES.

A fresh election holds more worth for you.  
I'm told the Government is weak from this,  
In new elections, Tories would prevail.

MR STEVENS.

Your Highness, it is sad you always think  
Of us as shallow, weaselly creatures, when  
In truth our motives are as high as yours.

CHARLES.

If elected you would seek to halt  
Or full dismiss the controversial law  
That causes all this current disarray?

MR STEVENS.

You are correct Your Highness, it would go.

*Enter CAMILLA.*

CHARLES.

Now Mr Stevens take the message back  
The King is stubborn and he will not move.

The surest and the smoothest course would be  
To make a new election and thereby  
We'll ask the people to resolve our spat.

MR STEVENS.

This is what I will press on all of them.  
A steady course to chart through rocky seas.

*He goes.*

SIR GORDON.

Your Highness, if there's nothing else I will  
Go organise the extra troops outside.

CHARLES.

Before you do, there's just one question more.  
Despite the nineteenth-century uniform  
And strangely soaring bearskin hats they wear,  
I wondered if the soldier's antique guns  
Did carry ammunition that was live.

SIR GORDON.

The men that stand so still outside the gates  
Do practise with their rifles every week.  
The funny hats are just a way to fuzz  
The brutal fact the army's on the streets,  
And answerable not to the police  
Or to the politician's changing whims,  
But only to their officer, and so,  
By ladder of command, to you, the Crown.  
Whatever comes to pass we will be there.

SIR GORDON *goes.*

CAMILLA.

What's all this talk of arms and loaded guns?

CHARLES.

The Parliament refuse to budge an inch,  
And like a horde of squatters, occupy  
A house that they are not entitled to.



CAMILLA.

But all these people, generals, judges  
Mr Stevens, none of them would be the men  
That you in normal circumstance would trust.

CHARLES.

The very air tastes strange these last few days.  
But having made a move I now must stick  
And see it through, even if I must make  
Fair-weather friends, who only seek the sun.

*Enter JAMES.*

JAMES.

Your Highness do forgive me bursting in  
But news has broken out today: there is  
Another problem –

CHARLES.

Yes? What problem now?

HARRY *enters with JESS.*

CAMILLA.

Oh Harry! We don't see enough of you.

HARRY.

Camilla, Father, here's my friend, her name  
Is Jess, she studies at St Martin's College

CHARLES.

St Martin's College? Good, so you're in art?

JESS.

Yeah

JAMES.

Your Highness please, if I can interrupt –

CHARLES.

Oh yes, James says a crisis looms once more  
So good to meet you Jess, but we –

HARRY.

I think

That James's crisis stands within this room.

JAMES.

You are correct.

CHARLES.

What do you mean, this room?

HARRY.

Please Dad, if I can be allowed to speak?  
For reasons you don't need to understand  
A picture made of Jessica that is  
Quite intimate has made its way onto  
The cover of the London paper and  
Will no doubt grace the nationals as well.  
There is attack toward her worse than I  
Have seen, 'gainst Kate, or me, or Mum, or you,  
I think because of class, the public's not  
So comfortable with someone like themselves  
But let me tell you she is something else  
To anything our family has known  
I suddenly can see my life before  
Was full of stupid idiocy to so  
Distract me from a sadness kept within  
Distract me cos I had nothing to love,  
And although yourself and William are  
Most loving in familial ways, I had  
No one to share thoughts with, no one who spent  
The time to work out who I was, and what  
I really needed. She has done all this,  
And still does more. A force of nature, makes  
Me laugh and think and grow. She's free, so free!  
But now she wants to leave me cos of this.

CAMILLA.

I've never heard you speak in such a way  
With passion, strength and rhythm too.

CHARLES.

My son has spoken, but the lady's quiet

Please Jessica, come tell me what you think.

JESS.

He's right, that in the last few weeks, we have  
Formed a relationship that is unique  
I do not want to leave your son, but now  
Each hand in London touch on me tonight  
I feel such shame it is unbearable.

JAMES.

Sir please, if I can add perspective to  
This well-intentioned but ill-fated match  
It is precisely what we've talked about  
A true irrelevance compared to what you face.  
Besides we can't be seen to halt the flood  
Of printed gossip when you hold the gates  
Open yourself.

CHARLES.

Yes thank you James of course  
If I defend the freedom of the press  
It's with the knowledge they will never live  
Up to a higher standard. Naked girls  
And boys will illustrate their pages.  
Horrific murders will be made still more  
Atrocious by intrusion, and they'll make  
Hypocrisy an art, insisting that  
They stand chief moralist while making cash  
As base pornographer. I know this much.  
So all that we can do is stand our ground.  
For if they're free to print this dirt, then we  
Have liberty as well, to answer back.  
Dear Jessica, you have done nothing wrong.  
I understand the picture causes shame,  
And there is little we can do 'bout that.  
But Harry is bewitched by you, and though  
I once did question what love meant I now  
Can see it standing here, so desperate,  
Begging you stay. So now you have my word,

You have the royal protection and respect.  
Whatever we can do to help we will.  
You will be welcome in our family  
A girl from Peckham made princess.

JESS.

But sir that's not –

HARRY.

It isn't that we want.

CAMILLA.

Come Harry, now it's done, your father has  
Been generous with time and inclination.

HARRY.

I do not want her noble princess made  
Instead descend myself into the mass  
Take off the princely burden of my birth  
And for my life be Harry, man and friend  
With job, and house, and car and maybe wife.  
I want to go with her into the world  
Not trap her here inside these regal walls.

CAMILLA.

It isn't possible.

HARRY.

If King approves it can through boredom work.  
We make no fuss 'cept that I have moved, got job.  
And will no longer take the civil list  
I'll have no role official and not Prince,  
I'll live a life of normalcy, within  
This country, rather than atop the mound  
Unearned and with a target on my back.

CHARLES.

You would not be a prince?

HARRY.

I'd be your son,  
But no, my love for Jessica comes first

Because like you, I don't believe that born  
A prince must mean I sacrifice my soul,  
My hopes, desires, all that makes me, me.  
Instead I should be free to choose my path  
We all should! William, yourself, young George  
Should be allowed an unpredicted life.

*He looks at them.*

CHARLES.

You are like opposites, in every way,  
But nature always places like 'gainst like,  
And dissimilarity instead does make a match.  
So Harry, yes, you may do as you wish.

JAMES.

If I can interrupt, whatever you  
May do, this story stays distraction when  
The throne itself is in dispute. Perhaps  
At least postpone this alteration to  
When you are safely crowned King

CHARLES.

Alright,

Then after coronation yes?

HARRY.

Okay?

JESS.

Okay.

CHARLES.

And James, in case the press persist  
You'll see the lady is defended yes?

JAMES.

...

CHARLES.

You have something to say?

JAMES.

Your Majesty... no.

I'll do as you command.

CHARLES.

Well good. For though my problems are the same  
Through Harry's love, I'm driven on again!

*They go.*

### 4.3

*Kensington.*

*Enter KATE, reading the Evening Standard.*

KATE.

It is bewildering that even now  
These little rooms of power are stocked full  
With white, and southern, likely Oxbridge men.  
Without the Queen, the bias is more stark  
The King's a man, Prime Minister as well  
Combine the front benches of both sides  
You'll have a female total of just four.  
And so despite emancipation we must look  
Towards the harder sex to find the power.  
But I know nothing, just a plastic doll  
Designed I'm told to stand embodying  
A male-created bland and standard wife,  
Whose only job is prettying the Prince, and then  
If possible, get pregnant with the royal  
And noble bump, to there produce some heirs.  
And in all this I'm told I don't have thought  
Or brains to comprehend my strange position.  
But being underestimated so  
Does give me what these men could never have  
Since no one asked me what I think, I can  
Observe and plan and learn the way to rule.  
For I will be a Queen unlike the ones before  
My mother's dad was in the north a miner born

My father came from Leeds, and both of them  
When young and inexperienced did risk  
Their house and all they had to try and make  
A business of their own. But it's not just this stock  
I bring to these most distant regal realms  
But something more important and precise  
I have ambition for my husband yes  
And hope my son will grow the finest King  
But if I must put up with taunts, and make  
So public everything I am, then I  
Demand things for myself, I ask no less  
Than power to achieve my will in fair  
Exchange for total service to the State.  
Yes this is what, enthroned, that I will do.  
Not simply help my husband in his crown  
But wear one of my own.

But here's my husband, he's been on the phone.

*Enter WILLIAM.*

How did it go?

WILLIAM.

I asked him of his plans.

KATE.

His plans?

WILLIAM.

Of what he did intend to do.

Now that there's violent protest up and down  
The country 'tween supporters of the Crown  
And those who want its swift complete demise.

KATE.

And what said he?

WILLIAM.

He simply said

The strength of public voice in strong support  
Did give him solace that he wasn't wrong.

KATE.

This is an answer clear enough to me.  
Charles is stranded, using what's to hand  
Does smile and say this was always the plan.

But what he hopes is that from out the blue  
There'll grow a noise, a chopping engine sound  
And through the clouds a helicopter comes.  
And lowering down its harness, scoops him up,  
And quickly lifts the tired reckless man  
To safety from the bleak and troubled rock.

A BUTLER *enters*.

BUTLER.

Your Highness. The Prime Minister. I didn't ask him here –

KATE.

I know.

*Enter MR EVANS. Also SIR MICHAEL, Head of the Metropolitan Police.*

Prime Minister you're good to meet.

MR EVANS.

This is Sir Michael Smith, the Acting Head  
Of Metropolitan Police.

WILLIAM.

Sir Michael –

KATE.

Much thanks for coming here. Perhaps begin  
By bringing us to date.

SIR MICHAEL.

So in the last  
Two weeks there has been violence seen in each  
And every major city 'cross the land.  
In Liverpool, a protest called against  
The King did march towards the Mersey and,  
Arriving, lifting up an effigy  
Made of your father, burnt it bright, before



They dropped it from the bridge into the sea.  
In Oxford marches formed upon both sides  
And clashed, rampaging through the streets.  
The same in Edinburgh, and Cardiff too  
In Glasgow, Belfast, Warwick, Inverness  
In *Norfolk*, one poor father pushed through glass  
Is still unconscious in intensive care.

MR EVANS.

The Speaker will not open up the House  
Because he fears it is illegal as things stand.  
And so the Members of the Parliament  
Do sit, just as four hundred years ago  
In Westminster Hall instead. But because  
We've only half the House, we can't make laws

WILLIAM.

We should stay calm, for still you are in charge.  
This is the way it works until there's new  
Prime Minister, the old fulfils the task.

MR EVANS.

Already Mr Stevens has questioned  
My right to make decisions.

WILLIAM.

Services

Are functioning well, the schools, police and health?

MR EVANS.

No sir, the schools have closed, police are stretched.  
The bloodshed worsens every day we wait  
And while we in the House attempt to calm  
The King has generals round to tea, and parks  
A tank in Buckingham Palace grounds.  
Perhaps exaggeration but there is talk  
Of civil war.

WILLIAM.

A joke.

SIR MICHAEL.

It's not at all.

KATE.

The British stock, which was considered safe  
Has in two whole weeks completely crashed.

WILLIAM.

Prime Minister, in private, I, of course,  
Wholeheartedly do give my full support.  
But this is for the Parliament to solve

KATE.

Oh William, they can't! Parliament is impotent.  
And just become a meeting house of men.  
The time has come to go and halt this mess.

MR EVANS.

Your Highness, please, your wife is quite correct.

WILLIAM.

I can't.

KATE.

For George!

WILLIAM.

You must not make me.

MR EVANS.

Then sir I think you will be Prince no more  
And none that follow will be King again.

*Pause.*

WILLIAM.

You are a man of serious intent.  
Throughout our recent troubles you have shown  
My father great respect and courtesy.

*Beat.*

Prime Minister go back to Number Ten  
You can leave it to me. I'll bring an end  
To this unnecessary episode.

MR EVANS.

I thank you sir. An intervention's what We need.

MR EVANS, *and party, leave.*

WILLIAM.

You set me up.

KATE.

I lifted you, my one.

To where by right of birth you ought to be.

*He looks at her a moment.*

WILLIAM.

Then if it's done, it's done at once.

ATTENDANTS *go.*

KATE.

But husband wait. I know the way.

WILLIAM.

The way?

KATE.

We'll go and ready George, and while we do I'll tell you all I've thought.

WILLIAM.

We ready George?

For what?

KATE.

Don't think you'll do this on your own

It's time our son did turn toward the throne.

*She goes.*

WILLIAM *follows.*

#### 4.4.

*Enter JAMES and a TELEVISION PRODUCER.*

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

And so we thought this room might serve us well.  
A neutral colour, good acoustic and  
The space to house the country's journalists.

JAMES.

Not just the country, all across the world  
The people wait to hear directly from the King.

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Of course, that's true.

*A pause.*

JAMES.

Would you be one of them?

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

You mean a king?

JAMES.

I mean a man or woman standing there  
In front of camera's gaze, instead of you  
Or I, who seek to do the best we can  
While hidden from the public's view.

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

This may seem strange, but sometimes I wake up  
From nightmares where I have been on TV  
And something's happened, just by chance, perhaps  
A light has blown, or chair collapsed, but I  
Am shocked, and jumping look ridiculous.  
And then that clip goes viral and from then  
Forever more, I am the man who jumped  
It is the matter of my life, and when  
I die it will be what is writ, not all  
I did, and wanted, and achieved, but that:  
A captured idiocy stuck on repeat.

*Enter CHARLES.*

Your Highness. Welcome. Here's the podium  
From which you'll speak, the autocue is there

CHARLES.

It's good. Thank you. How long do we now have?

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Perhaps we'll let them in, in oh, five mins?

JAMES.

In that case let us have a moment to prepare?

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Of course, I'll be next door, just let me know.

*The TELEVISION PRODUCER goes.*

CHARLES.

I'm still not full persuaded of the need  
To speak like this to everyone, I'm not  
Sure what to say.

JAMES.

Every night,  
Prime Minister, and politicians of all creeds,  
With nothing else to do, now that their normal  
Auditorium is shut down,  
Do hop to television, and once there  
They make the case in detail, all the time  
Against Your Majesty. My fear is that  
Without your voice in contest heard.  
The public mood will turn away. And so  
Although I know it's your idea of hell.  
You must here stand, and meet the press.

*CHARLES stands in the right place.*

Remember that they are, near to a man  
Surprised that you have leapt to their defence.  
And thus will be most generous to your views.

CHARLES.

I hope that's right, we've never been that close.

*Enter WILLIAM, with KATE, who's holding George. And  
ATTENDANTS.*

But William, what's this? I didn't know  
You would be here, I thought you disapproved.

WILLIAM.

I'll always serve the interests of the Crown.

KATE.

As family, we should be seen as one.  
James says it's what they will expect of us.

CHARLES.

So it was James persuaded you to come?

WILLIAM.

It was in conversation yes, we thought  
It would be best to come along like this.

CHARLES.

I don't know how to thank you James.  
It will be now with pride and strength of clan  
I stand my ground and state my case, with not  
Just one but two more kings beside me here.

WILLIAM.

We'll stand indeed.

*The TELEVISION PRODUCER enters.*

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Your Highness, Duchess.

Yes, ma'am you will be standing there, and sir,  
Just to the right hand of His Majesty.

CHARLES.

As always James you've foreseen everything.  
The picture here, like this, is now complete.  
The family will be my backdrop and the news  
Will say, the country's safe, and clear united.

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

So are we ready now?

CHARLES.

We are, proceed.

CHARLES *stands. The TELEVISION PRODUCER opens the door and in floods the PRESS, to find CHARLES waiting for them.*

Good afternoon, I'll give you all some time  
To get arranged I know you like to barge  
And jostle for position. Hi Nick! And... John.

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

We'll make a start in sixty seconds' time  
Is everyone arranged where they can see?  
That's good, so thirty, twenty, ten...

CHARLES *goes to move forward, when suddenly – WILLIAM stands, holding George, and walks quickly in front of him, to the podium.*

CHARLES, *confused, stands to the side. JAMES tries to guide him to a chair, but he refuses.*

Live in five, four...

*Bright light – on WILLIAM. CHARLES to the side, behind him, in full view.*

WILLIAM.

Good afternoon. And gosh, there's quite a few  
Of you. This actually is George's third  
Press conference so, he's getting rather good.

*A laugh.*

Although I think this time I'll do most of the talking.

*A bigger laugh.*

So thank you all for coming here today,  
And for the people listening in at home,  
Across the country and the Commonwealth.  
My wife and I, and George, have been so shocked  
By scenes unfolding, here and overseas.  
My father has, through noble conscience said,  
As is his right, he will withhold assent,  
And furthermore, as is legal too,  
He has dismissed elected government.  
Of course this has resulted in disquiet

Not just in homes and streets, or in the House,  
But in our family too. My wife and I  
Respect my father's choices, but, do wish,  
It could have been avoided. And so.  
Today I do announce that I, as Prince  
Of Wales, from now will try to mediate  
Between the King and House of Commons.  
I'm convinced there is a way to move on this.  
Without the need for further violence, and  
Respecting both democracy and the  
Ancient British power of anointed King.  
I have my father's blessing in this role.  
He is as keen as I to see an end  
To this destructive and divisive time.  
I'm also lucky to have Catherine too.  
For all of this was actually her idea.  
Turns out she's cleverer than all of us!

*Some laughter.*

She'll sort us out!

*More laughter.*

CHARLES *turns to face* WILLIAM.

*Looks at him for a moment. Furious.*

*A camera flash, then CHARLES turns, walks off the platform and out of the door.*

*Flashing of photographs.*

My father's finding this quite difficult.  
As you'd imagine, so he needs support.  
Forgive me if I don't take questions now  
But once we're up and running, I will speak  
Again. Perhaps we'll just do photographs?  
Thank you, thank you Nick, and John.

*He stands back and smiles. KATE joins him.*

*Photos are taken of the family – shouting – adulation.*



## ACT FIVE

### 5.1

*Buckingham Palace.*

*The sound of the crowd outside.*

CHARLES *enters with a book.*

CHARLES.

I have been through the archive many times  
But read as King each word seems made afresh.  
I have been seeking moments which relate  
Precisely to the current state of play  
Our English law is based on precedent  
And when I'm called to make my case I must  
Have all the facts to hand, examples of  
When monarchs in the past have also done  
The same as I, or very near. And so.  
Here's Walter Bagehot, eighteen sixty-seven,  
Explaining changes to balance of  
The Crown and State. I read it as a child.  
One line stands out: Bagehot explains that now  
The monarch's mostly ceremonial  
And only can expect, from hereon in:  
The right to be consulted (which I've not)  
The right to encourage (which is all I do),  
And most importantly the right to warn.  
'The Right to Warn' so warning is the thing  
It's only what I do, I warn, but even that  
I'm told's too much and so must tolerate  
This constant fuzz of bright white noise  
That emanates from out the baying mob.

*The BUTLER enters.*

BUTLER.

Your Majesty, James Reiss waits outside.

CHARLES.

The traitor's at the gate. What does he want?

BUTLER.

To see you sir. He'll say no more than that.

CHARLES.

Allow him in.

*The BUTLER goes. Enter JAMES.*

The silver lining when someone defects  
Is you don't have to see them any more.

JAMES.

I wanted to explain.

CHARLES.

You knew what William would say to them?

JAMES.

Indeed I made it possible for him to speak.

CHARLES.

You ambushed me.

JAMES.

It was, just as he said,  
The Duchess's idea. And William, knowing  
Not just that I desired the bill  
Against the press to pass, but that I thought  
Your current course of action fatal to  
The strong continued influence of the Crown,  
Did suggest this plan, which although I knew  
Would cause you pain, I did believe would when  
It all was weighed, be thought of as the best.

CHARLES.

It matters not. It will not work. For I  
Am not in need of mediation here.  
There is no common ground, no compromise.

Anointed not by man, but God, I don't  
Negotiate but issue my commands.  
So here I'll sit, and wait for what I want  
To come into existence. I can wait,  
A very long time, I have my books to read.

JAMES.

But sir, you must –

CHARLES.

You're surely not intending still to work,  
For me, not after treachery like this?

JAMES.

Your son has offered me employment.

CHARLES.

So leave. You've said your bit. And no, before  
You ask, you're not forgiven. Actually  
I hope you fail in everything you do.

JAMES.

Then sir, farewell.

*He goes.*

*A roar from the crowd outside.*

CHARLES *goes to the window.*

CHARLES.

Be calmed! Your King commands you now to cease!  
And yet they do not hear, another case  
Of this, the disproportion of the features.  
When unlike me, their ears, so rarely used  
Are shrivelled up and tiny, but their mouth  
From making constant noise, is swollen up  
And when not talking fixes in a grin  
Of no emotion, Botoxed into place.  
Be quiet all! Some silence here! But no.  
They think they're at a music festival,  
Although they say it's anger on the news  
They danced around a fire lit within

The fountain and seemed happy there last night.  
But wait, there's movement, noise, a grinding sound  
The tank below, its engines started up  
It's moving round, what's happening now?  
The tank was there for show, it should not act  
And I should be aware of any change  
But wait – it doesn't move towards the crowd  
Instead it's off the other way, and out of sight.  
I should be told if things have changed, Roberts!  
Roberts! Where is that man – some butler he, who's never there!

WILLIAM *enters*.

William – Where's Roberts gone?

WILLIAM.

I said to take an hour off.

CHARLES.

You said –

WILLIAM.

That's right Your Majesty we need to speak.

CHARLES.

'Your Majesty'? But William, it's me.

Despite the horrid things you've done, it's me.

So call me Dad, or Father if you like,

But not Your Majesty, like all the rest.

WILLIAM.

I call you that for that is what you are

Before my father, long before all else

You are the King, and that's to whom I speak.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

But William come look at this, a book

It's Bagehot from the ancient archive here

It does enlighten on the changing way

The monarchy has influence over

The State. It is a thing of quiet beauty.

I'm like a book myself, stuck on the shelf  
For years, ignored and waiting, only judged  
By one small sliver of the cover whole,  
And sitting thus unopened and unused,  
The outer surface gathers dust and fades  
But if the moment comes to read the tome,  
And it's removed and rarely opened up  
The words and thoughts inside are here  
As fresh and potent as the day of print.

WILLIAM.

What did he write?

CHARLES.

That I can warn the State  
And more expect to fairly be consulted

WILLIAM.

They did at length consult the Queen before –

CHARLES.

My mother's dead, and we must start again.

WILLIAM.

You think too much on books and history.

CHARLES.

But what is power held if never used?

WILLIAM.

Our duty's not to simply sit indoors  
And hope it is resolved, but to engage  
All parties and attempt to find a way –

CHARLES.

'Engage all parties'? King's no such duty

WILLIAM.

A duty royal. That's shared amongst us all.

CHARLES.

I will speak harshly William that I  
Do not request your counsel, I do not need  
Another view. Instead it is support

Expected and support that you must give.  
Apart from Prince you also are my son,  
I know that at your age you'll have a sense  
That in the prime of life, you shouldn't be  
Attending on an old and feeble parent,  
So there's temptation then to patronise  
Ironically the ones who gave you birth,  
To roll your eyes, and make a joke about  
The modern things they do not understand.  
But doing this is seen by all around  
As juvenile, the mockery of age  
As easy humour, and actually it's wise  
To listen well, respect those older, and  
Most subtly to learn and grow beside  
To draw upon their strength while standing close  
And offering support to deal with age.

WILLIAM.

It's not about a father and a son  
But only what a king must do or not  
It is the title I address today  
And not my father who of course I love

CHARLES.

You cannot make distinction 'tween the two  
When both of us are born and grown towards  
A single purpose from our opening breath  
To final gasp, our whole existence, all  
Relationships and yes our family,  
Is every atom crowned and every cell  
Within our bodies built by monarchy.

Your action yesterday was infantile  
And does not alter anything at all.  
You should apologise for such betrayal.  
But I will put it down to youth, and nerves.

Now help me and go fetch good Roberts here.  
The tank is still remiss, and all those guards  
Sir Gordon kindly put in place have gone.

WILLIAM.

I know.

CHARLES.

You know? What do you mean you know?

WILLIAM.

Sir Gordon came to Kensington. We spoke.  
I said with the unrest and violence that  
Has spread across the country we should not  
Be stoking it with these provocative  
Militaristic shows.

CHARLES.

And what said he?

WILLIAM.

That it was not a show and swore he had  
In consultation here with you agreed  
It was important that the Palace is  
Defended from attacks within the crowd.

CHARLES.

Exactly, you should not have questioned it.

WILLIAM.

But having heard his answer I went on  
That in an hour I would head towards  
The Palace in the car, the same I drove  
That sunny day I married my fair wife.  
Escorted by police I'll drive straight down  
The Mall and enter through the guarded gates.  
I then intend to go around the yard  
And if, I said, there is a tank, I'll ask  
My men in blue that they do move it off.  
Because it is a danger, having such  
A deadly weapon aimed towards the crowd.  
Sir Gordon stared, he stopped and thought.  
And then he asked if I was really serious?  
Would I incite a clash between the troops  
Who all held guns and the unarmed police?

I stared at him, just as I stare at you,  
And said I'm looking forward to my drive.

*Beat.*

And when as promised I drove down the Mall  
Police on either side, expecting that  
The crowd would see me and attack the car,  
Instead they saw who steered and parted there  
To let us through, and as we went between,  
The mob, a silence fell upon them all.  
It was most strange, they stopped and watched us go.

*Beat.*

There was no tank, or military might.  
And just two guards stood to attention there.

*Beat.*

And as the gates began to close, one girl  
Called out 'You tell him Will' and so I must.

CHARLES.

Must tell me what?

WILLIAM.

You can't go back from your decision now.

CHARLES.

Agreed, retreating now would be the end.

WILLIAM.

And yet you can't progress, the Parliament  
Will never hold elections as you wish.

CHARLES.

We'll see.

WILLIAM.

So I propose on coronation day,  
We have two thrones upon the dais placed,  
And sat on cushions next to them are  
Two crowns awaiting royal heads to rest.



CHARLES.

Two thrones, two crowns, it is not possible  
For Britain and the Commonwealth to have  
As you suggest two kings in tandem rule.

WILLIAM.

No not two kings. A King and Queen.

CHARLES.

You mean Camilla, oft we have discussed –

WILLIAM.

Camilla no.

CHARLES.

Then what do you intend?

WILLIAM.

...

CHARLES.

Cos if it's what I think then you must speak  
The words of treachery yourself and shank  
Your father with a full and clear betrayal.

WILLIAM.

I mean myself and Kate are crowned instead.

*Beat.*

CHARLES.

And what of me? I simply stand aside?

WILLIAM.

You offer abdication and explain  
Since taking on the role, you've felt your age.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

There's something in your face I recognise  
A stern expression, reckless and so bold,  
It was Diana where I saw it last,  
And I had hoped that it had died with her.  
But here it is, in you, ambition lurks.

WILLIAM.

I'm proud of that ambition, proud of her  
Who plucked so young before she knew the world  
And thrust into a den of lions, keen  
For meat, was given no protection, and  
When you decided to make return to one  
You always loved, you threw my mum aside  
Discarded and destroyed her by repute

CHARLES.

I loved your mother at the time and did  
My very best to make sure you weren't harmed

WILLIAM.

And that will be your tombstone – 'Did my best.  
At least I tried!' A plea for effort rather than effect.  
That's you as husband, you as son, as father too.  
And now as King. But all our sympathy  
Is withered up and dry. This is a job.  
You should have got it right and you did not.

CHARLES.

Be careful what you say, you've always had  
My unconditional and total love  
I said whatever thing you did, my love  
Would never end, but with those words my mind  
Does change. I think that I could wash my hands  
Of you and not look back.

WILLIAM.

Unneeded and  
Romantic gestures seem to be your fault.  
You needn't let me go. There doesn't have  
To be this constant turbulence you've brought.  
I will as King return to what your mother did,  
Stability and certainty, above  
All else, a steady rudder through the waves.  
*A cheer from the people outside.*

CHARLES.

What's that the people jeer again? Shut up!  
Be silent! We should have them cleared away!

WILLIAM.

It's not a jeer they call but something else.

CHARLES.

I will not abdicate! Ungrateful boy!  
I'll never give the crown away, for me  
It's duty and my calling, things to do!  
I know, don't ask me how, that I will be  
The greatest King of all.

WILLIAM.

And so you shall.

For when they write the history books 'bout this  
They will tell stories crisis-like about  
The stormy days after the Queen had died  
And how for weeks you contemplated hard  
Upon the right and proper thing to do,  
And in the end decided for the good of all,  
Your people and their long-term happiness  
You'd selflessly stand down and pass it on,  
To younger hands, more popular and with  
More time to reign. This move will then be seen,  
Today and ever more, as when the Crown  
Did save itself and through a clever move  
An idea of the greatest King we had,  
Renewed the brand to last another century.

CHARLES.

A nice conceit, but no, I will be King  
As ruler not as doormat stepped across.

WILLIAM *goes to the door.*

WILLIAM.

Mr Evans.

MR EVANS *enters.*

CHARLES.

No go! I do not wish to see you now.

WILLIAM.

But Father your Prime Minister is here.

He surely must be given audience

MR EVANS.

Your Majesty, this is a sorry day

But if you cannot sign the law you must

Make way for one who can. Your good repute

Will be preserved, and monarchy survive.

I have brought here, a document to make

Official abdication, so we can

Achieve a common goal: Stability.

CHARLES.

Who made this thing, this paper here?

MR EVANS.

The Civil Service drew it up today.

CHARLES.

And printed out in haste, there are mistakes

In spelling and the layout's strange indeed.

WILLIAM.

Will you sign?

CHARLES.

I will not.

*CAMILLA enters. Behind her, following, is KATE and HARRY.*

CAMILLA.

Is it true?

CHARLES.

It is.

*CAMILLA turns and slaps WILLIAM. CHARLES meanwhile stares at HARRY.*

CAMILLA.

A vile and nasty child.

And what's that document you're holding there?  
You must do nothing till we have consulted  
With experts on the constitution and  
The lawyers that we pay so much money to.

*She looks at it.*

I thought it Harry who was wild, but you  
Have now by far surpassed his worst excess  
Charles would not sign the bill, he will not this.  
I realise you and Catherine are the King  
And Queen of column inches but you're just  
A Duke and Duchess here. The King is King.  
He will not sign. Now both of you away.

KATE.

Your thin opinion of us demonstrates  
How out of touch you are, and jealous too.  
Our looks don't make us cruel, our youth is not  
An ignorance, and detail in the way we dress  
Should not be thought as vanity, but is  
Part of the substance only we provide.  
We know the world. Our column inches are  
The greatest influence that we possess.  
Your Highness sign. And bring an end to this

CHARLES *goes to* HARRY.

CHARLES.

My son, your loyalty!  
For your relationship with Jessica,  
Has been a burning light these darkest days.  
We talked of staying true to what you feel  
And when I'm crowned you will be free to live  
And love, just as we spoke about, my son –

HARRY.

The people turn to William. This is  
The only way. I am convinced.

*Beat.*

CHARLES.

Harry. Please.

My boys. My little boys.

*Pause.*

Of course you're scared. But I know what I do.

So sit. Let's talk. If Roberts's gone I will

Myself go fetch some tea, and someone here

Will show me how it's made. That was a joke.

Harry. Please.

HARRY.

We'll have the tea, and sit and be your sons

But first you abdicate

CHARLES.

And if I don't?

WILLIAM.

Then we will leave, and wait, and not return

Yes, us, and Kate and George. And family else.

This is tough love, we're all agreed it's best.

You will not see us till you change your mind.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

I will not see my sons? Or grandson too?

*Pause.*

I cannot live alone.

CAMILLA.

You're not alone

And even if you were, well better that

Than father-servant to your shallow sons.

The man I married will not bend, or break

Instead, as all the world throws rotten fruit

He will be firm and tie his life onto

The stake of principle.

*Pause.*

You boys should go, and take this spiteful drip.  
He is not worthy of the office that he has.

CHARLES.

I cannot live alone.

*They all look at him.*

The greatest King?

WILLIAM.

You will ensure survival of us all.

CAMILLA.

I know if given time you will prevail –

CHARLES.

I've lost a wife. And father. Mother too.

I cannot lose my sons.

CAMILLA.

My Charles, you won't.

*A pause.*

CHARLES.

I'm so tired.

*He signs.*

So there, it's done, the King is at an end.

I will retreat to bed, and when I wake

To a new dawn, I'll simply be an old

Forgotten gardener, who potters round

And talks to plants and chuckles to himself.

Whilest far away the King and Queen do rule

Over a golden age of monarchy,

That bothers no one, does no good, and is

A pretty plastic picture with no meaning.

*He goes.*

CAMILLA *looks at WILLIAM. Then follows.*

## 5.2

*Westminster Abbey.*

*Before the coronation.*

*To one side, CHARLES and CAMILLA wait. CHARLES is unreadable – watching over the preamble... just watching...*

MR STEVENS *enters and goes to CHARLES.*

MR STEVENS.

Your Highness, may I personally say that I  
Despite my public view of happiness  
In fact do think this tragic, and a hard  
And bitter end to what you tried to do.  
I'll always think of Charles as noble King  
As man of honour much too principled  
For realpolitik. You may be gone  
In constitution but to me you will  
Remain my king of hearts, of all before  
You are the very best we never had.

*An awkward pause. CHARLES doesn't look at him.*

*He smiles and moves on to his place.*

*Enter MR EVANS. He sees CHARLES and decides not to have a conversation.*

*Instead he walks on to his place.*

*Next, JESS enters. In contrast to everyone else, she's wearing smart jeans and a relatively normal top. She's holding the seating plan, but is confused.*

*COOTSY enters. He sees JESS, unsure of herself.*

COOTSY.

Ah. Jessica. Didn't fancy dressing up?

JESS.

No.

COOTSY.

Couldn't afford it?



*He goes. Enter JAMES.*

JAMES.

Miss Jessica, why do you seem so lost,  
And stand unoriented in the Abbey aisle?

JESS.

I'll not tell you, you have no love for me.  
The King said help but now it's even worse  
There's every picture from my wayward youth  
Made weekly fodder for the *Daily Mail*,  
And any minor misdemeanour makes  
A banner headline in the *Sun*. From how  
They write of what I do, you'd think that art  
Was rated worse than brutal homicide.

JAMES.

Well miss, I'm not sure how much art you've seen,  
But it can often feel like one has died.

JESS.

I understood the law was changed for this  
When journalism turns to voyeurs' gawp.

JAMES.

Indeed but somehow nothing has been done.

JESS.

Because you want me gone.

JAMES.

Not true, I've tried my best to help.  
These stories do us both no good at all.

JESS.

Your eyes are small, I don't know what to think.

JAMES.

Tell me what's your problem miss.

JESS.

The seating plan, my name does not appear.

JAMES.

Well let me see.

*He looks.*

It's true there is no Jessica. You're sure  
The Prince did make his invitation known?

JESS.

I'm sure.

*Enter HARRY.*

JAMES.

Perhaps it would be best,  
To find out from the man himself, for here  
He comes, so handsome in his uniform.  
Your Highness, yes, it's such a happy day.  
Although I wouldn't know it from your pale  
And cloudy face. Here's Jessica who seems  
Omitted from the seating plan. Maybe  
You'll know a little more 'bout this than I.

*He goes.*

JESS.

Okay, so where am I supposed to sit?  
Not next to you, it seems, not even near.  
In fact I am not found at all. Are you  
Alright? I've never seen you grey and stark.

HARRY.

You'll not attend today, as William  
And Kate are crowned, you'll have to watch outside.

JESS.

Outside? But why?

HARRY.

I...

JESS.

Harry?

HARRY.

My brother, talking with his wife, and close  
Advisers, bearing all the photographs  
And stories of your past that do appear,  
In mind. Do feel it would be best you not  
Attend. You are too big a risk to what  
He needs: Stability –

JESS.

But that's –

HARRY.

And furthermore

He's asked me personally if I would stop  
All contact with you and resume the way  
I was before, a singleton, amusing  
Mostly, clownish and unthreatening.  
Therefore I'm sat, as previously planned  
With Cootsy, Spencer. These most harmless friends.

JESS.

I hope you quickly told him where to go.

HARRY.

He is my brother.

JESS.

You're fucking joking. Older brothers  
Do often, in the name fraternal, try  
To squash their younger siblings underfoot.

HARRY.

But more than that, he's now anointed King.

*Pause.*

JESS.

So King can tell you what to feel and who  
You love. The King's dictator of your heart.

HARRY.

My heart was made by King, if I betray  
Allegiance then the little that I am is gone.

JESS.

But things have changed. He has to understand  
And if you loved me you'd fight this.

*Beat.*

Or if I have to go, you'd come with me.

HARRY.

I want to.

*Pause. Then he stands to attention, looks away.*

It's starting soon.

*She stares at him for a moment. Then goes.*

HARRY *stands alone.*

*Music starts and he takes his place.*

*A choir begins singing, and orchestra plays.*

*All stand.*

*The doors open and KATE enters with ATTENDANTS.*

*She processes in and sits on the throne.*

*The procession of WILLIAM enters with ATTENDANTS.*

*Once settled, the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY comes forward.*

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

I here present to you King William your undoubted King. Wherefore all  
you who are come this day to do your homage and service. Are you  
willing to do the same?

ALL.

God Save the King!

*The regalia – crown, sceptre, orb, ring, glove, etc., is placed on the altar.*

*WILLIAM is given a Bible.*

*Over the next, WILLIAM is given all the regalia except the crown.*

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Is Your Majesty willing to take the Oath?

WILLIAM.

I am willing.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and of your Possessions and other Territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, according to their respective laws and customs?

WILLIAM.

I solemnly promise so to do.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Will you to your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgements?

WILLIAM.

I will.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel?

Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?

Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England?

WILLIAM.

All this I promise to do.

*A choir sings.*

*The ARCHBISHOP goes and gets the crown.*

*He brings it forward to WILLIAM.*

*CHARLES suddenly stands – a consternation. This isn't supposed to happen.*

*He goes and looks at the crown.*

*The choir stops singing.*

*CHARLES reaches for the crown. The ARCHBISHOP is unsure.*

*Glances at WILLIAM. Then gives the crown to CHARLES.*

*A moment.*

CHARLES.

It is much heavier than I thought.

*He looks at WILLIAM.*

*A moment.*

And from the side, bejewelled, it looks so rich

But turn it thus, and this is what you see

Nothing.

*Beat.*

My son.

CHARLES *puts the crown on WILLIAM's head.*

God save King William, unking'd Charles says,

And send him many years of sunshine days!

CHARLES *slowly collapses and sits on the step.* WILLIAM *stands.*

*A long pause.*

WILLIAM *looks to the ARCHBISHOP.*

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

God save the King!

ALL.

God save the King!

*End.*

## MIKE BARTLETT

Mike Bartlett's plays include *An Intervention* (Paines Plough/Watford Palace Theatre); *Bull* (Sheffield Theatres/Off-Broadway); *Medea* (Glasgow Citizens/Headlong); *Chariots of Fire* (based on the film; Hampstead/West End); *13* (National Theatre); *Love, Love, Love* (Paines Plough/Plymouth Drum/Royal Court); *Earthquakes in London* (Headlong/National Theatre); *Cock* (Royal Court/Off-Broadway); *Artefacts* (Nabokov/Bush); *Contractions* and *My Child* (Royal Court).

He is currently Associate Playwright at Paines Plough, was Writer-in-Residence at the National Theatre in 2011, and was the Pearson Playwright-in-Residence at the Royal Court Theatre in 2007. *Cock* won an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre in 2010. *Love, Love, Love* won the TMA Best New Play Award in 2011.

Directing credits include *Medea* (Glasgow Citizens/Headlong); *Honest* (Northampton Royal & Derngate) and *Class* (Tristan Bates).

He has written seven plays for BBC Radio, winning the Writers' Guild Tinniswood and Imison prizes for *Not Talking*, and his three-part television series, *The Town*, was broadcast on ITV1 in 2012 and nominated for a BAFTA for Breakthrough Talent.

He is currently developing television projects with the BBC, ITV, Big Talk, and Drama Republic, and under commission from Headlong Theatre, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, Hampstead Theatre, and the Royal Court Theatre.

## **A Nick Hern Book**

*King Charles III* first published in Great Britain in 2014 as a paperback original by Nick Hern Books Limited, The Glasshouse, 49a Goldhawk Road, London W12 8QP

This ebook edition first published in 2014

*King Charles III* copyright © 2014 Mike Bartlett

Mike Bartlett has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work

Cover image by NBstudio.co.uk

Designed and typeset by Nick Hern Books, London

ISBN 978 1 78001 420 3 (ebook edition)

ISBN 978 1 84842 397 8 (print edition)

**CAUTION** This ebook is copyright material and must not be copied, reproduced, transferred, distributed, leased, licensed or publicly performed or used in any way except as specifically permitted in writing by the publishers, as allowed under the terms and conditions under which it was purchased or as strictly permitted by applicable copyright law. Any unauthorised distribution or use of this text may be a direct infringement of the author's and publisher's rights, and those responsible may be liable in law accordingly.

**Amateur Performing Rights** Applications for performance, including readings and excerpts, by amateurs in English should be addressed to the Performing Rights Manager, Nick Hern Books, The Glasshouse, 49a Goldhawk Road, London W12 8QP, *tel* +44 (0)20 8749 4953, *e-mail* [info@nickhernbooks.co.uk](mailto:info@nickhernbooks.co.uk), except as follows:

*Australia:* Dominie Drama, 8 Cross Street, Brookvale 2100, *tel* (+2) 9938 8686 *fax* (2) 9938 8695, *e-mail* [drama@dominie.com.au](mailto:drama@dominie.com.au)

*New Zealand:* Play Bureau, PO Box 9013, St Clair, Dunedin 9047, *tel* (3) 455 9959, *e-mail* [play.bureau.nz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:play.bureau.nz@xtra.co.nz)

*South Africa:* DALRO (pty) Ltd, PO Box 31627, 2017 Braamfontein, *tel* (11) 712 8000, *fax* (11) 403 9094, *e-mail* [theatricals@dalro.co.za](mailto:theatricals@dalro.co.za)

*United States of America and Canada:* The Agency (London) Ltd, see details below

**Professional Performing Rights** Applications for performance by professionals in any medium and in any language throughout the world (and amateur and stock performances in the United States of America and Canada) should be addressed to The Agency (London) Ltd, 24 Pottery Lane, Holland Park, London W11 4LZ, *fax* +44 (0)20 7727 9037, *e-mail* [info@theagency.co.uk](mailto:info@theagency.co.uk)

No performance of any kind may be given unless a licence has been obtained. Applications should be made before rehearsals begin. Publication of this play does not necessarily indicate its availability for amateur performance.